The Art Of Alex Schomburg

DjF du Marais

Alex Schomburg

Alex Schomburg was born on May 10, 1905 in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. He was the youngest of four brothers in his family. The eldest brother was Fred. His next-oldest brother was August, who also became a pulp artist and created many covers for Flying Aces in the late 1930s.Then William anf then Alex.

In 1917 Fred was twenty five and he moved to New York City and brought along his three younger brothers, including twelve year old Alex, who was sent to public school. They lived in Harlem at 630 West 124th Street, near Broadway. In 1923 all four brothers started their own freelance art studio, with Fred as the manager and salesman, William as a clerk, and August and Alex as the artists. They build window displays, lettered signs, and illustrated song slides for theater organists. In 1928 they sold the business to a manufacturer of slides, and the company then hired Alex Schomburg to work for them.

In 1929 he joined the National Screen Service company as a staff artist, where he helped to produce movie trailers for fifteen years.

In his free time he also created freelance illustrations. His first assignments to appear in published magazines were Westerns, Popular Detective, Radio Craft, Sky Raiders, Thrilling Adventures.

He sold his first science-fiction themed magazine cover in 1939. According to the artist, "One day the publisher asked me to do an illustration for Thrilling Wonder Stories

I had always been interested in science fiction and they liked the way I handled the art work. I enjoy reading the story as much as doing the illustrations. In my opinion an illustration is very important. For instance, give the same story to two different persons...then ask them to picture a certain scene. You can bet they'll be entirely different."

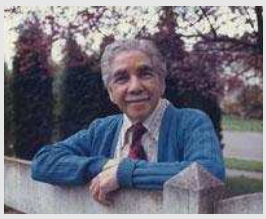
He created interiors and cover paintings for Startling Stories, Fantastic Story, Dynamic Science Fiction, Science Fiction Quarterly, and Thrilling Wonders Stories.

From the late 1930s to the late 1940s he created over five hundred covers for comic books, including Captain America, The Human Torch, Sub Mariner, Black Terror, and The Green Hornet.

He left the comic industry in the 1950s and concentrated on illustrating books and science fiction magazines, including the Winston Science Fiction series for young readers.

According to Stan Lee, **"*Alex Schomburg was totally unique. I remember hearing Timely Comics publisher Martin Goodman tell me time and again how great a cover illustrator Alex was, and how he wished we had more like him. He was the only artist I knew able to combine strong, dramatic layouts, and exciting superhero action with a simplistic, almost cartoony style of execution. One could never be sure if Alex was an illustrator who approached his work like a cartoonist, or a cartoonist who chose to render his artwork like an illustrator. Despite the quantity of work we gave him, despite the care and effort that went into every Schomburg cover, I cannot remember Alex ever being late with any illustration. He was as reliable as he was talented.*"**

ALEX SCHOMBURG



Alex Schomburg died at age 92 on April 7, 1998.

Alex Schomburg - Gunman Airbrushed Illustration Original Art (circa 1940s)

Stan **Lee** has said, "***I've always felt that Alex Schomburg was to comic books what Norman Rockwell was to the Saturday Evening Post. He was totally unique, with an amazing distinctive style. You could never mistake a Schomburg cover for any other artist's***".

Before he launched his legendary career in comics, Alex Schomburg worked as a commercial artist for National Screen Service. In the monograph Chroma: The Art of Alex Schomburg, the talented artist recalled his days there,

"***National is where I learned most of my craft. We did a lot of art of all different kinds. Most of the illustrations were done in black and white and with the aid of an airbrush. This gave me a chance to really learn to operate an airbrush; I became pretty good at it.***"

That's an understatement ! The main figure in this scene, with his snap brim hat, overcoat, and Thompson machine gun bears more than a passing resemblance to the legendary crime stopper, Dick Tracy -- is this fellow a gangster or a G-Man ?

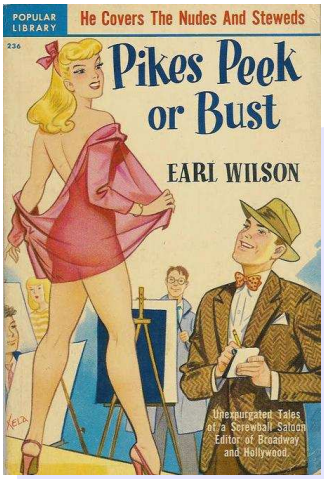
Alex Schomburg

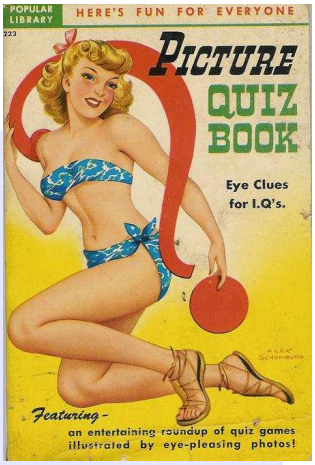
(American, 1905-1998): is perhaps most celebrated by comic book fans for his action-packed superhero and airbrushed "good girl" covers done during the Golden Age. In addition to his comic book art, Schomburg is also remembered for his stellar science fiction scenes, done for pulps, digests, magazines, and children's books. In later years Schomburg re-created some of his most famous comic book covers as finely detailed paintings. Former Marvel writer, editor, and publisher

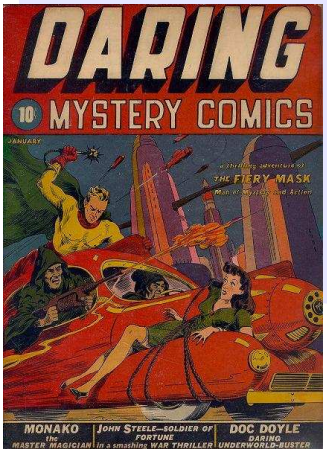
Alex Schomburg - **Downed Japanese Zero** Watercolor Painting Original Art (undated).

Whether the subject was realistic or fantastic, few artists could paint war machinery with the verve of Alex Schomburg. This terrific watercolor painting shows the aftermath of an aerial dogfight - a downed Japanese Zero.

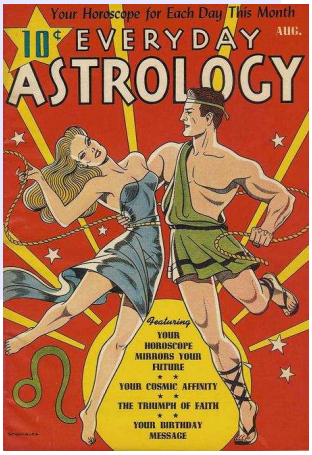
This beautiful watercolor shows another facet of the talent of the undisputed King of Golden Age covers.

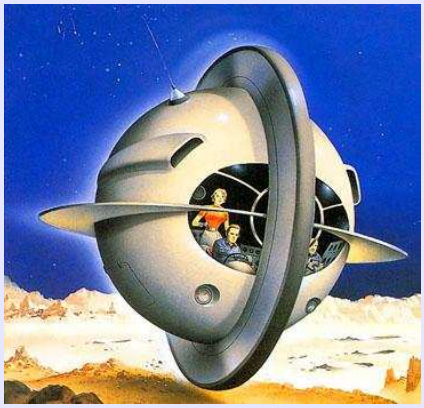






Daring Mystery (#1,1940)





BRAIN-TORTURING NOVELETTE OF BLOOD-LOVE BEYOND THE GRAVE!

MATES FOR THE MORGUE-MASTER

By Arthur J. Burks

Author of "Dance with My Bride and Die," etc.

I had seen the corpse of Merry Tarn through the eyes of my immortal soul, and I could marry her only in the morgue!

"Warm! Warm!" she whispered. "And I need warmth so dreadfully!"

CHAPTER I

WOMAN IN THE MIST

I Took the job as night watchman at the Heller City Morgue for the same reason that any man who is down and out takes any kind of job he can get. Some people would call me a bum, and many had, and will again, but then if I'm a bum so are several millions of other people who can't get work, even in morgues.

They had a strange system at Heller City Morgue, or maybe it wasn't so strange. I think the boss of the morgue labored under the fear of being buried alive or something, or burying somebody else alive, for he had a system of bells worked out. The stiffs were kept in a vault in a basement, and besides each slab there was a bell. The idea was

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Alex Schomburg Bucky Sketch Original Art (undated)

AGONY IN CLAY

by Mindret Lord

Author of "The House That Horror Built," etc.

I am the master of pain, of agony and death, and the next time you feel an excruciating stab, anywhere in your body—try to remember! Is there a photograph of you that I could have found?

For answer, she tore the silk asunder

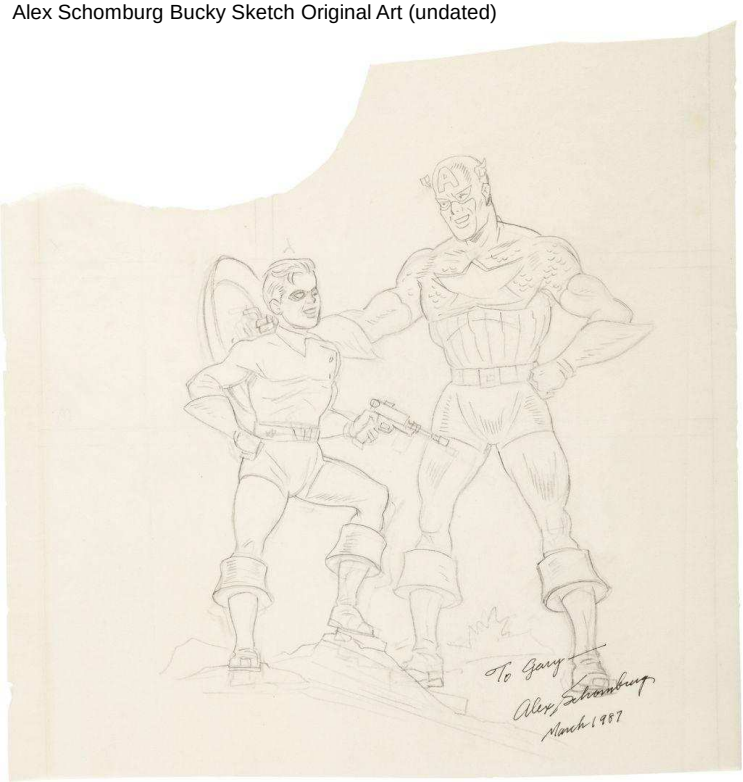
LAST year I was a poor, unrecognized sculptor. Today, I am rich. Next year—perhaps I will rule the world, if I choose to do so.

The first time, I thought it was just a strange coincidence. . . . I was making a figurine of a model named Carlotta. She was a good looking girl with a fine body and I was modeling her in clay—it was going to be a nude, about eighteen inches high. By the time the light began to fail, I was almost finished. Another day's work would surely be enough—and I was well pleased with what I had done.

When Carlotta got her clothes on, I said, "Come back tomorrow and I'll polish this up. You know, I think this figurine will make my reputation!"

She folded her arms and said, "May-

29



Alex Schomburg Captain America and Bucky Sketch Original Art (1987)

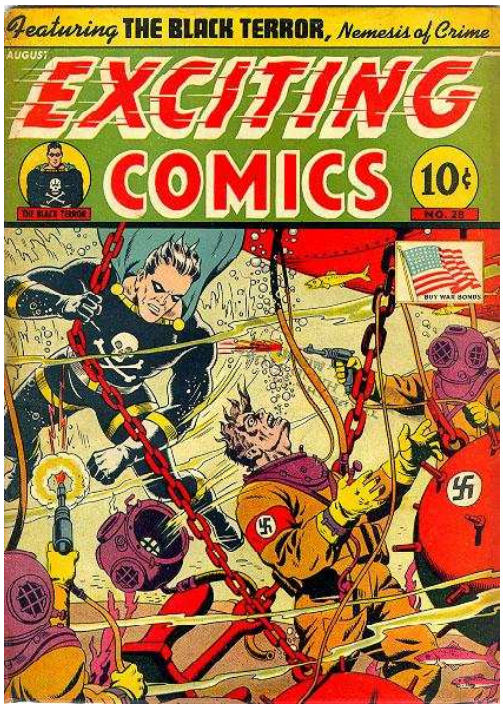
Mystic Comics #2 (Timely, 1940)

Marvel Mystery Comics #5 (Timely, 1940)

The Loot of Time-Thrilling Wonder Stories, December 1938

Exciting Comics #28

August 1943 Nedor
This scarce comic is much sought after and is rarely seen. The Black Terror thwarts a bunch of Nazis from deploying anti ship mines in the ocean depth



Marvel Mystery Comics #44

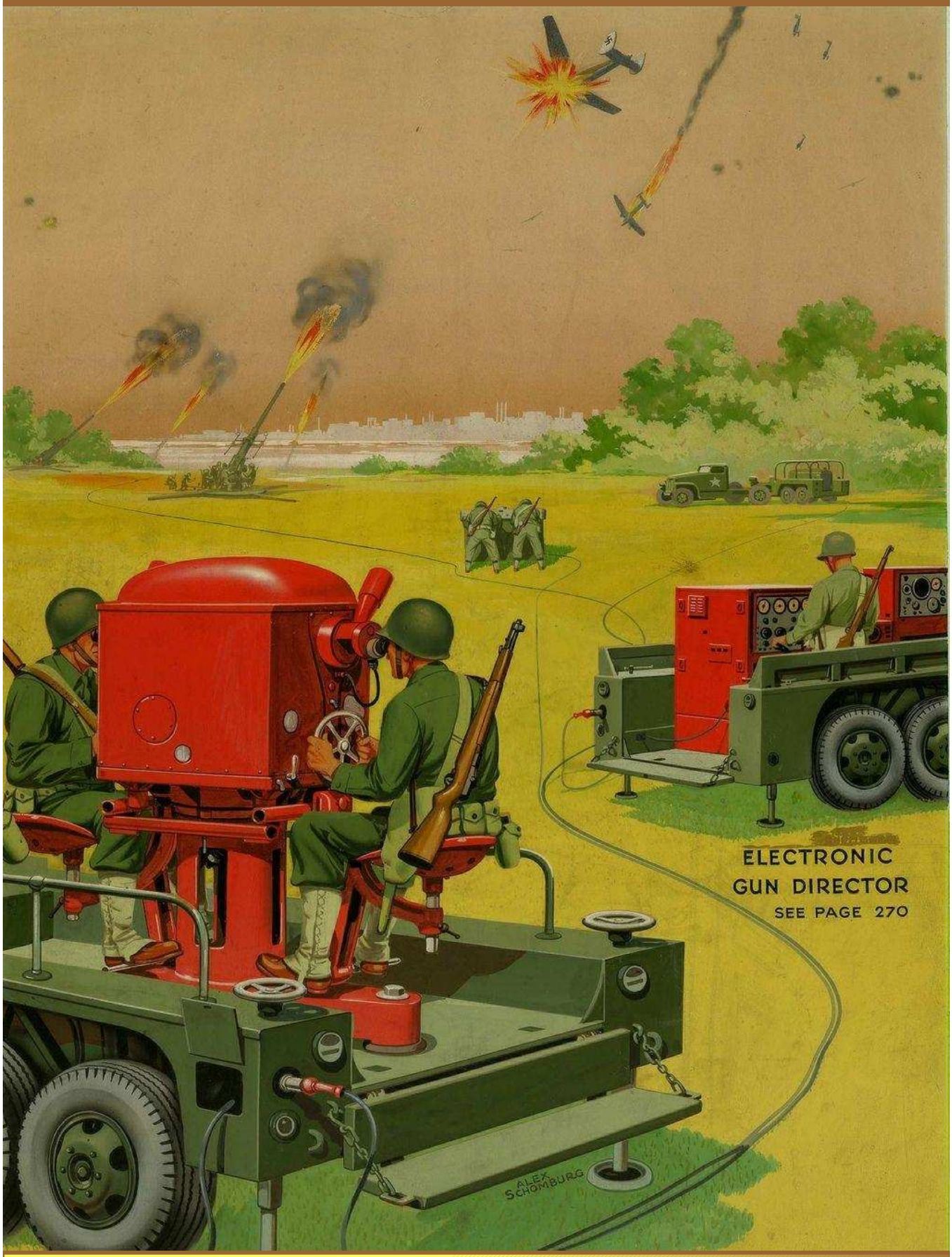
June 1943 Timely

Ahhh.... The infamous Superplane cover by the incomparable Alex Schomburg. This cover is pure Schomburg at his best! Stunning action! Larger than life vehicles! And total Mayhem! Note the incredible scale of the plane as evidenced by the size of the tanks falling from the belly of the Nazi aircraft. Also note that the scene takes place over Russia and it is the Human Torch and Toro that rescue the Kremlin from Hitler's minions!

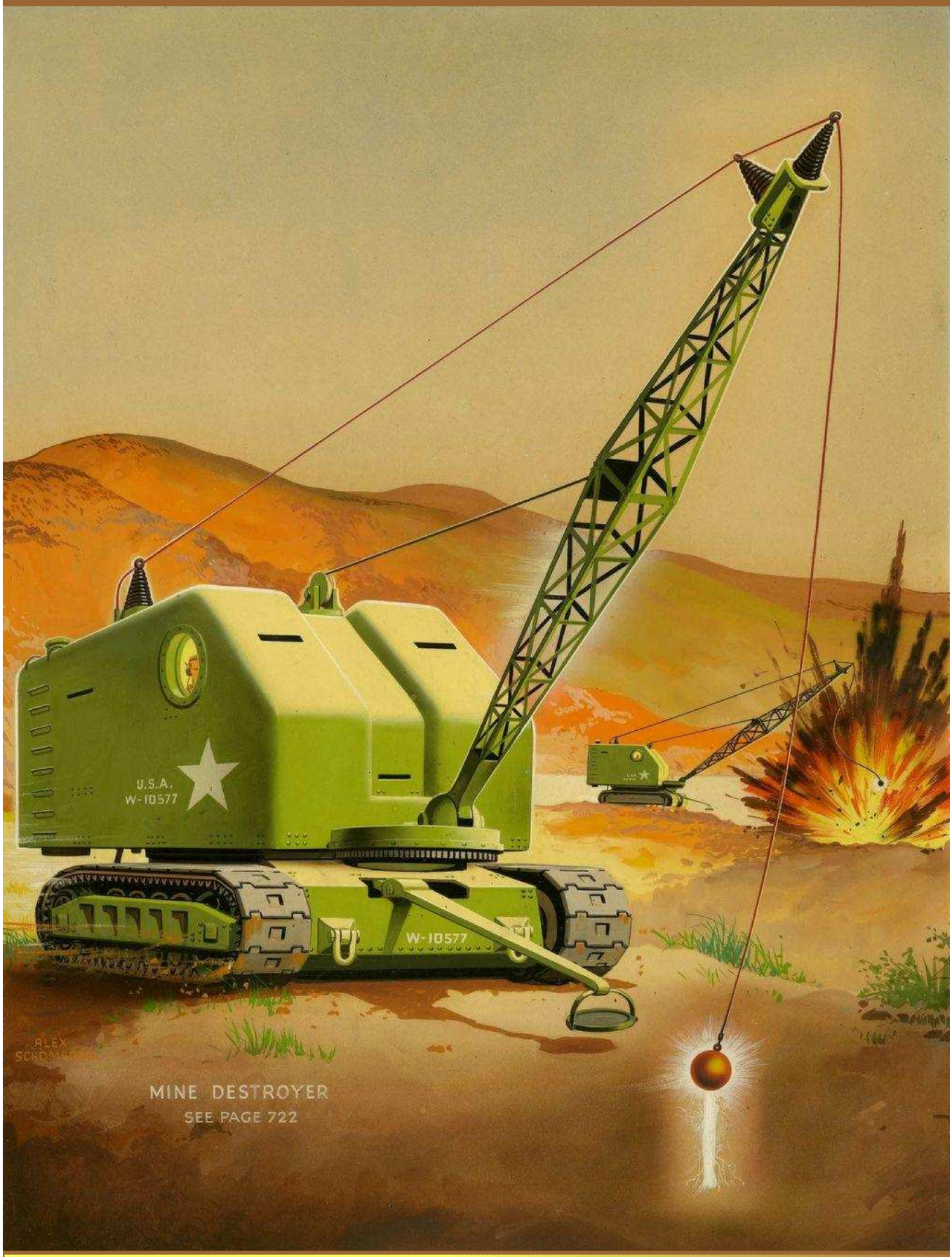
Starling Comics - September 1946 Nedor

Pyroman looks just a tad too gleeful with that A-Bomb that he's carrying, eh? Maybe that's because he's just volunteered for the Atomic Test advertised on the newspaper he's busting through! This spiffy Alex Schomburg cover demonstrates his craft in creating provocative covers

Marvel Comics #36 - Nazi invasion cutaway (1942)



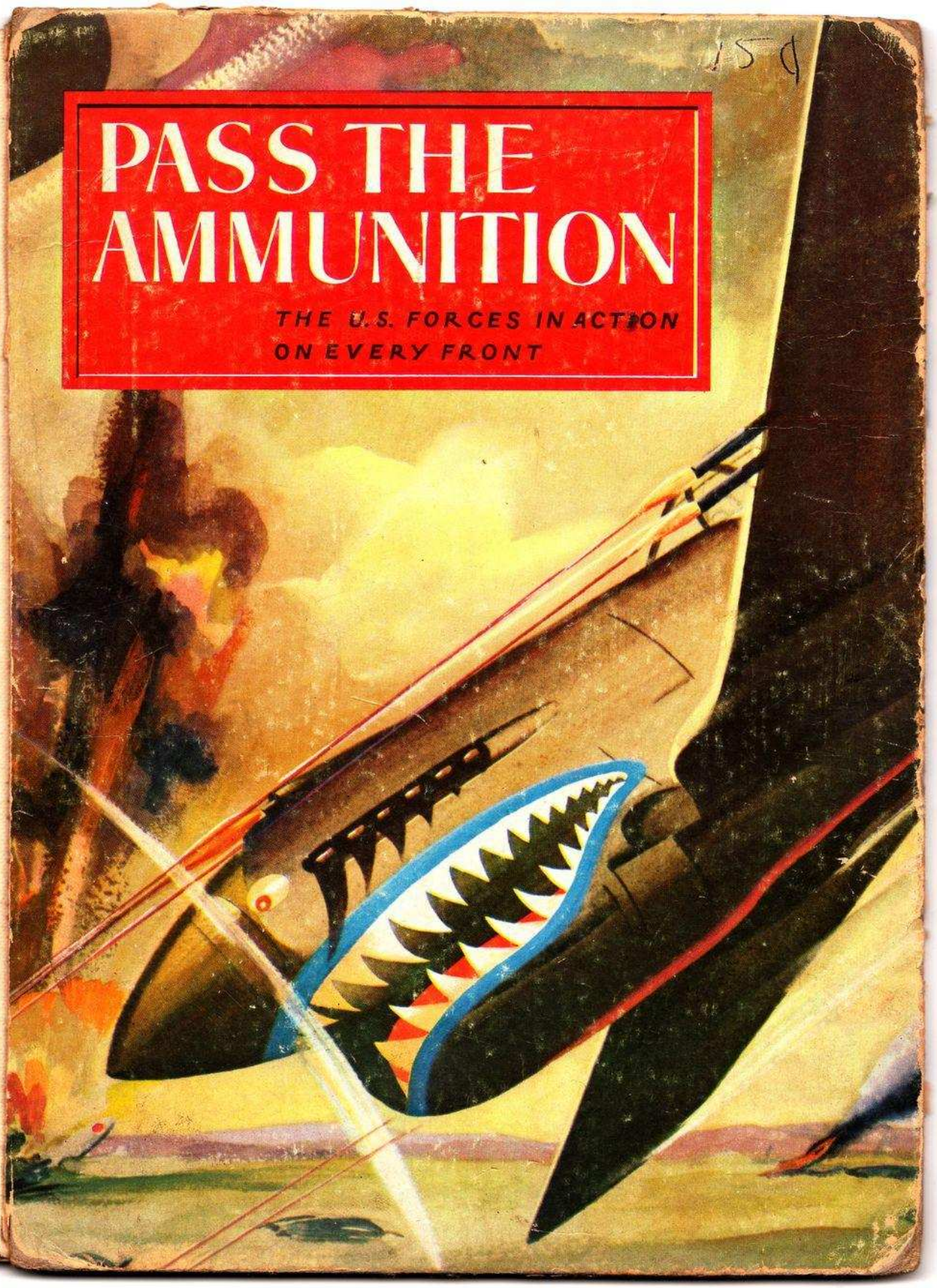
Alex Schomburg - Original Cover Art - "**Electronic Gun Director**" (circa 1943). Although he didn't do battle on the front lines, Alex Schomburg contributed greatly to the war effort in his own way by inspiring others to fight the good fight. His creations graced thousands of comic books, pulps, and magazines during WWIII.

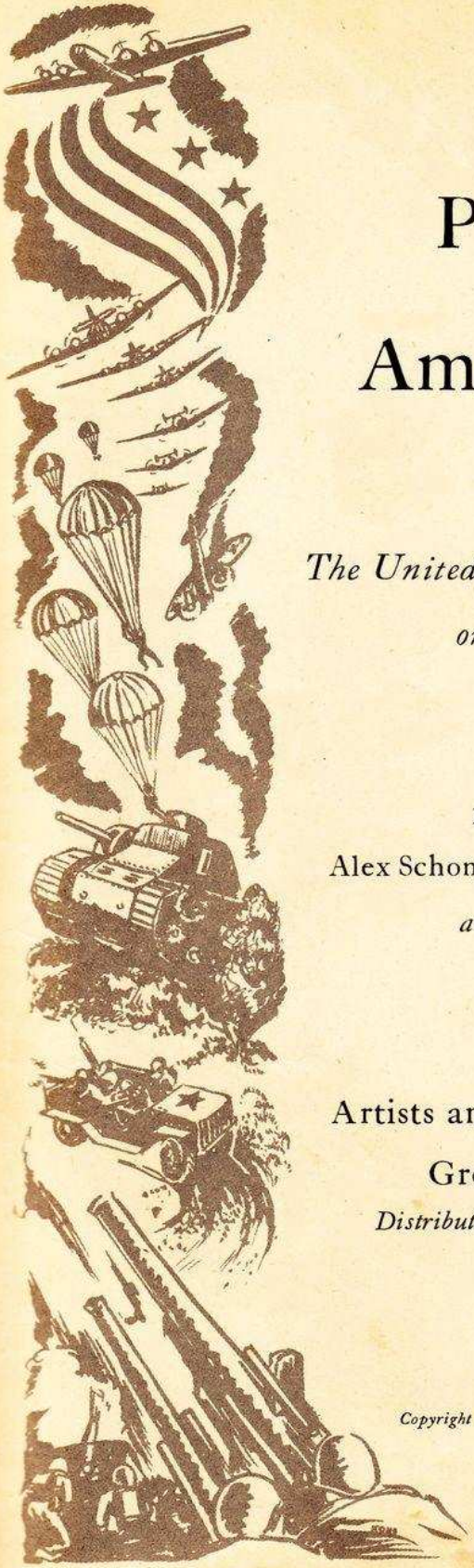


Alex Schomburg - Original Cover Art - "**Mine Destroyer**" (circa 1943). Whether they were life-saving devices or death machines, nobody could create fantastic machinery like Alex Schomburg. This original cover painting to an unidentified magazine depicts a creation called the Mine Destroyer.

PASS THE AMMUNITION

THE U.S. FORCES IN ACTION ON EVERY FRONT





Pass the Ammunition

☆

The United States Forces in Action on Every Front

☆

ILLUSTRATED BY

Alex Schomburg · August Schomburg

and Taylor Lewis

Artists and Writers Guild, Inc.

Grosset & Dunlap

Distributors NEW YORK

Printed in the U. S. A.

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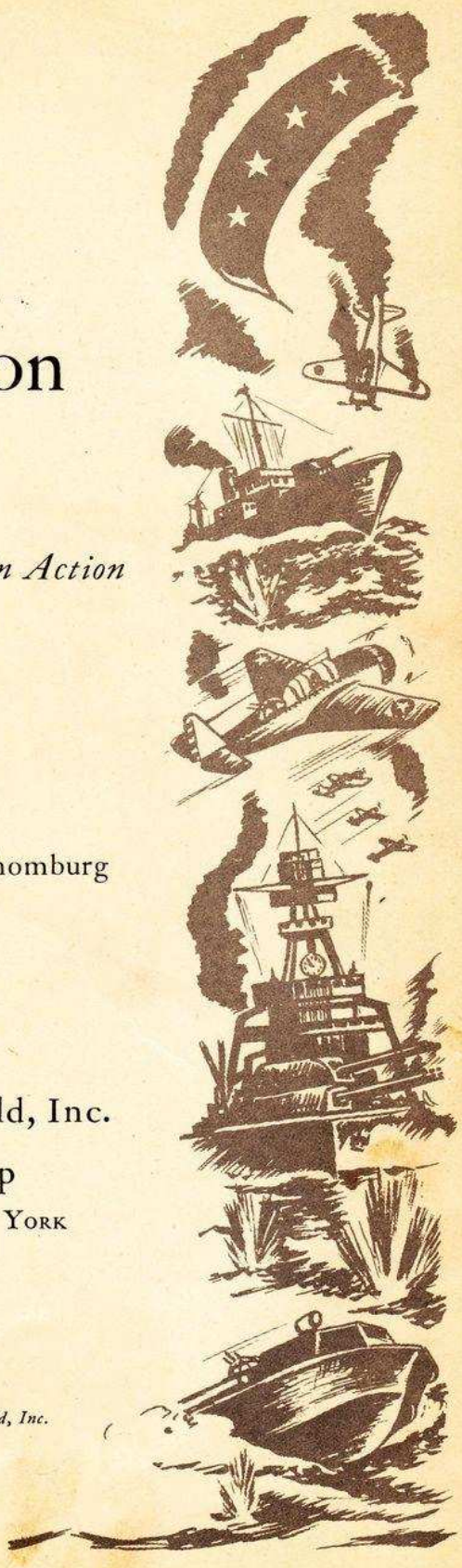


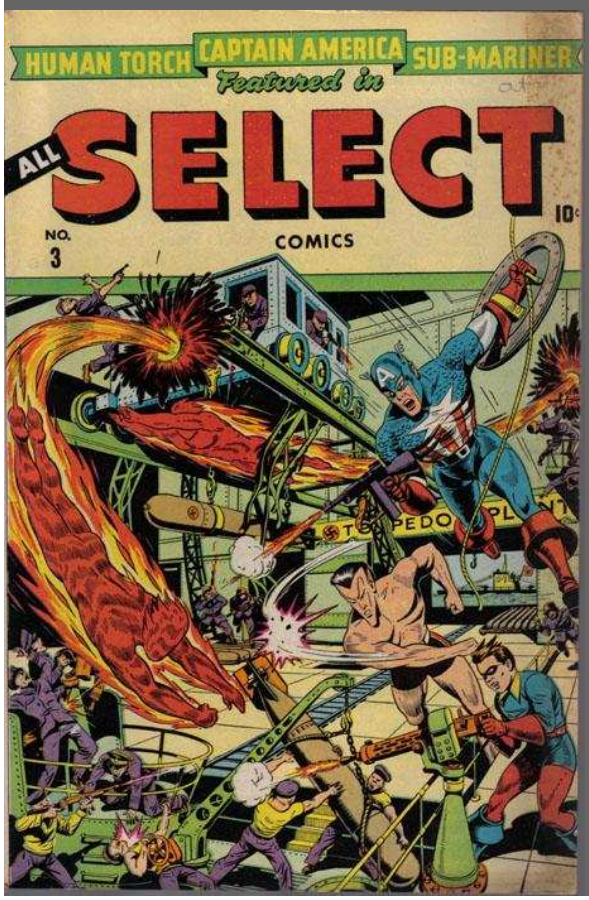
414
ALEX

ALEX
SCHOMBURG

ALEX
SCHOMBURG

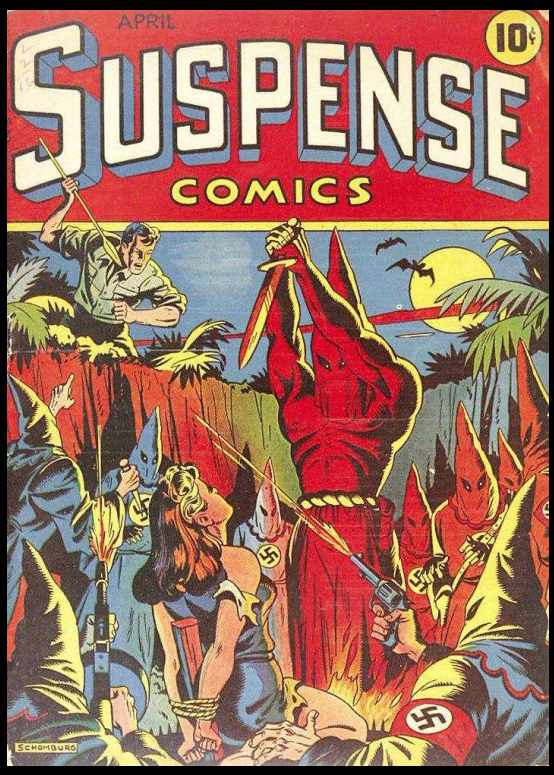
ALEX
SCHOMBURG

Alex worked for a number of companies but did an especially large amount of Timely superhero covers. Here we have the first few covers for All Select Comics, a quarterly that featured stories about the company's big three. They had separate stories but got together on the cover to scatter Nazis.



Terrific Comlcs, #5
Sepembert 1944

Marvel Comics, #46
August 1943 Timely

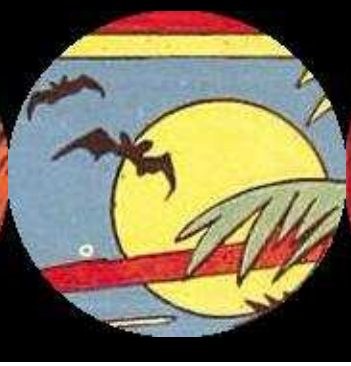


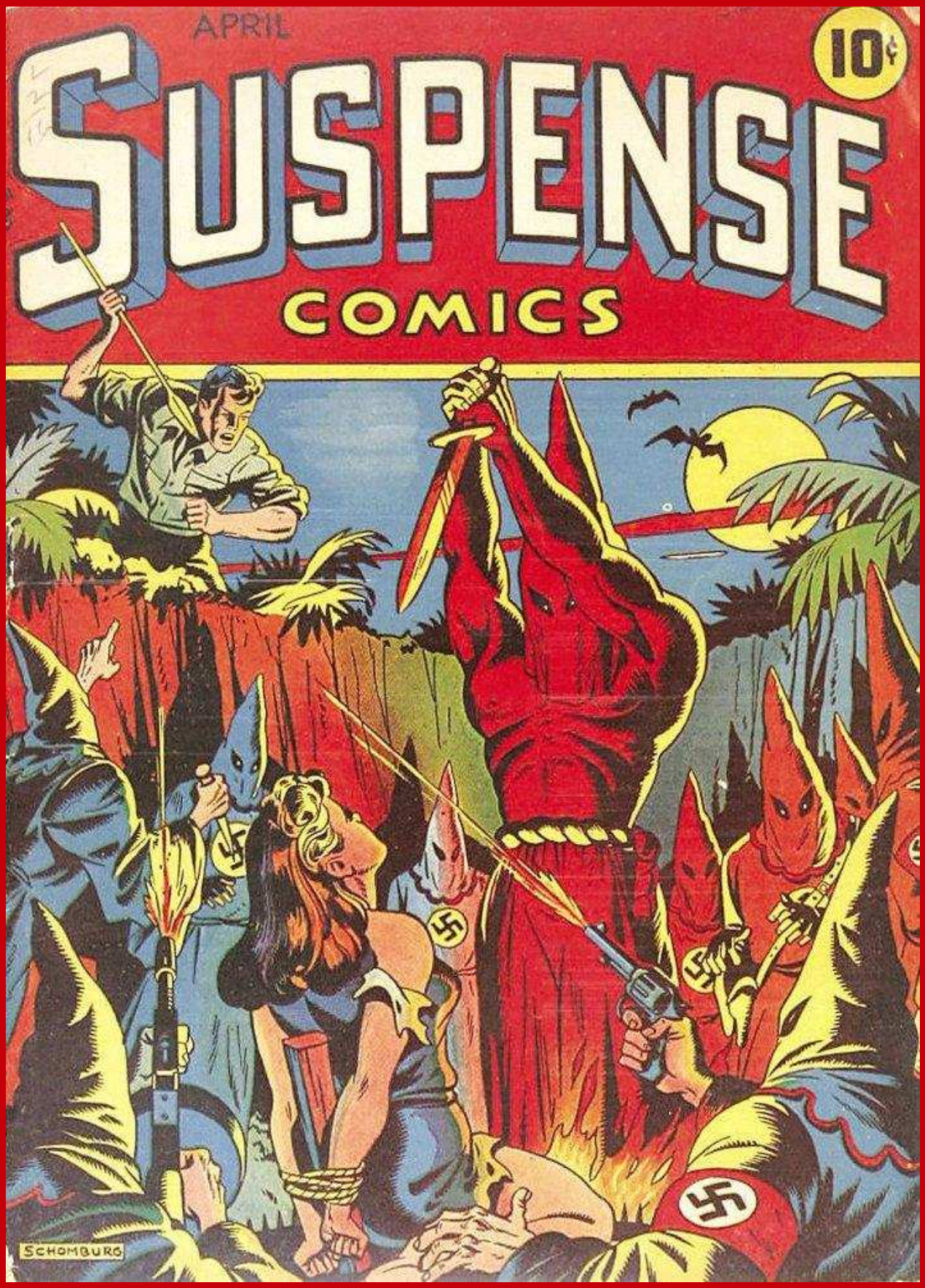
Continental Magazines, 1944

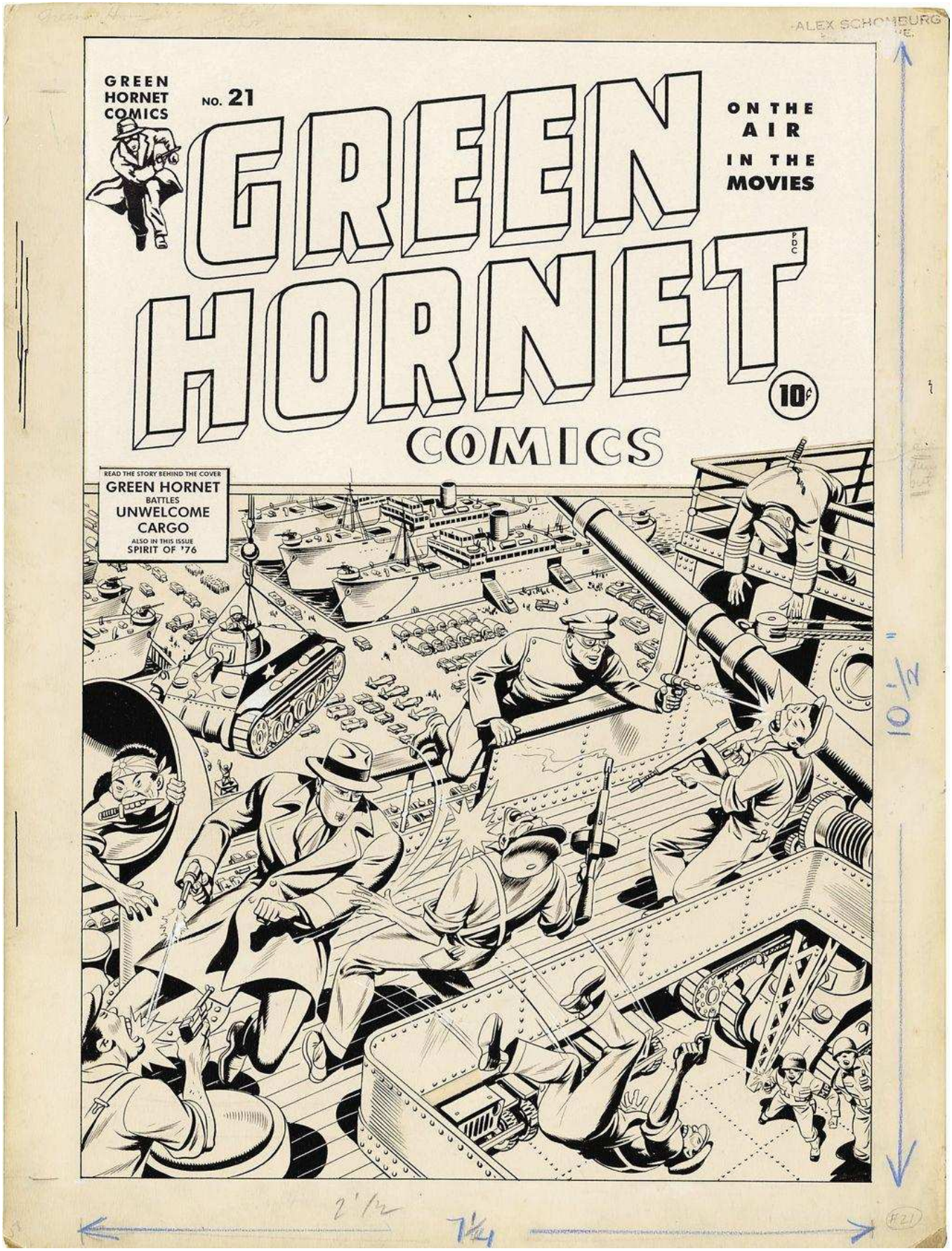
Suspense Comics #3

Ever since its Alex Schomburg bondage cover was featured on the frontispiece of Gerber's Photo-Journal, collectors have been in a feeding frenzy to obtain a copy of this book. Its classic cover, the often missing centerfold story "83 Days On A Life-Raft", and a seven pager by L. B. Cole simply add to the excitement of collectors.

Gerber rates this comic as "very rare" and Overstreet calls it "scarce" and ranks it among the 100 most valuable Golden Age comics. There have only been nine unrestored copies graded by CGC to date, and only two issues top this one. CGC notes, "Very small piece of tape on centerfold at staple."




APRIL
SUSPENSE
COMICS
10¢
SCHOMBURG



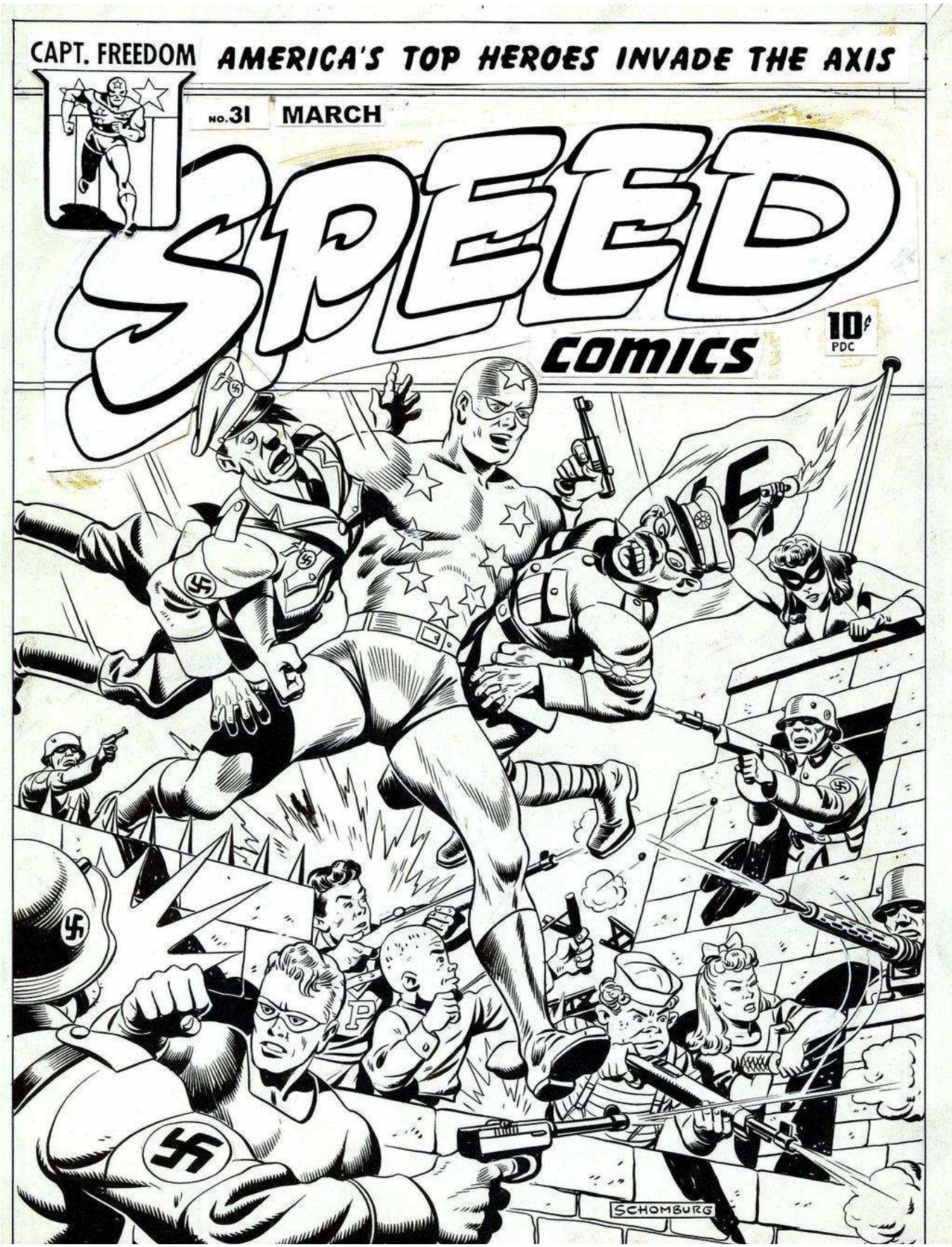
America's favorite World War II cover artist does it again with this magnificent action-packed illustration. The Green Hornet and his sidekick Kato stop the Japanese saboteurs, against the backdrop of a busy naval port with more going on in this one cover than many titles could produce in a year's time! Schomburg's use of white-out is particularly impressive here, creating highlights as the guns blast away, and speed lines as one gunman topples down the hatch. This large Golden Age art board measures 15" x 20", with an image area of 12.5" x 18".

Alex Schomburg - **Green Hornet #17**

(Harvey, 1944).

Alex Schomburg - **Green Hornet #21**

(Harvey, 1944).



Alex Schomburg - Original Cover Art for **Speed Comics #31** (Harvey, 1944). By 1944, despite the fierce battles being waged with Germany and Japan, America's resolve to win the "great war" was as strong as ever. The comic industry as a whole had reflected that sentiment even before America officially entered the war. The classic cover to Speed Comics #31 by Alex Schomburg magnified those feelings and has long been admired by serious collectors of Golden Age comics. Heritage is proud to present the original cover art that must have evoked patriotic outbursts as Captain Freedom, the mighty arm of the United States, carries Hitler and Hirohito through the conflict while Black Cat, Shock Gibson, and the Young Defenders fight against the tyranny of Nazism. Schomburg's skill with an ink brush is a joy to behold. Every line was methodically placed creating master compositions that accentuated the most important elements yet allowed the eye to easily move around so as to experience every little nuance of the image.

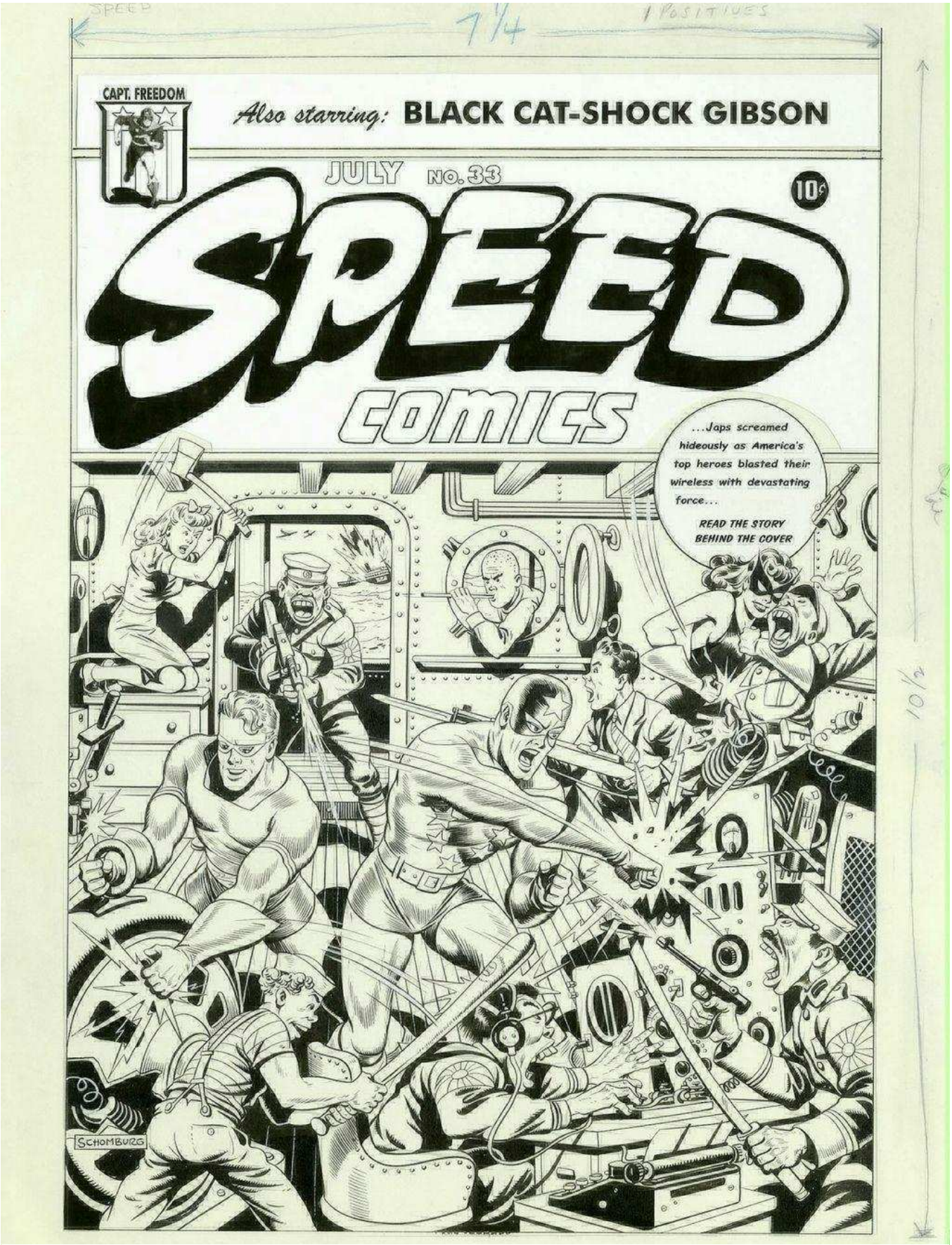
CAPT. FREEDOM

AMERICA'S TOP HEROES INVADE THE AXIS

NO. 31 MARCH

SPEED COMICS

10¢ PDC



Alex Schomburg - Original Cover Art for **Speed Comics #33** (Harvey, 1944). The collectibility of many Golden Age comics can be traced directly to the man who drew their covers: Alex Schomburg; he is unquestionably the finest cover illustrator to work in the industry during the 1940s. This outstanding Speed cover fairly boils with kinetic action, as Captain Freedom, Shock Gibson, and the Black Cat triumph over heavily-armed Axis thugs. The portrayal of the enemy may not exactly be politically correct, but the mastery of the artist is not in question. The artwork is so complex and rich that every examination rewards the viewer with a host of subtle nuances. Covers of this quality and vintage rarely leave the collections in which they are safely nestled, and the work of Alex Schomburg is even less likely to come to public auction, making this an opportunity not to be ignored. This wonderful piece of artwork is in excellent condition and is sure to be the gem of any collection. It was produced on a thick piece of illustration board that measures approximately 16.5" x 22.25". The image area measures 13.75" x 20.25". The title mast area and text circle are recent replacements.

CAPT FREEDOM
Also starring: BLACK CAT–SHOCK GIBSON
JULY NO. 33
10¢
SPEED COMICS
...Japs screamed hideously as America's top heroes blasted their wireless with devastating force...
READ THE STORY BEHIND THE COVER
SCHOMBURG

Thrilling Comics #53

Big Apple pedigree (Better Publications, 1946)

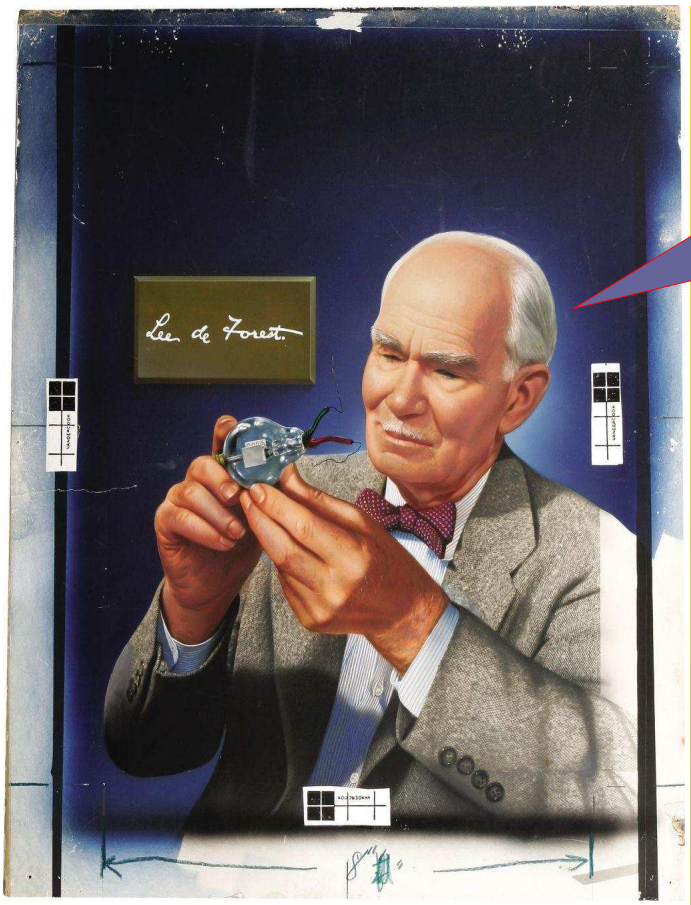
White pages. Alex Schomburg cover depicting Doc Strange punching out a gorilla, who's latched on to a girl in a torn dress. Great! And, it's from the fabled Big Apple collection, with white pages. To top it all off, the Phantom Detective begins in this issue.

Wonder Comics #10

(Better Publications, 1947).

	As comics ventured into the post-WWII era, Alex Schomburg began to take on a more straightforward approach to covers, eschewing his usually busy compositions and putting characters in a more pulp-like setting. Certain elements were left in place, such as girls in bondage, but it became apparent that the pre-eminent wartime cover artist had moved on to a new phase in his career

Exciting Comics #53 (Nedor Publications, 1947). Miss Masque cover by Alex Schomburg

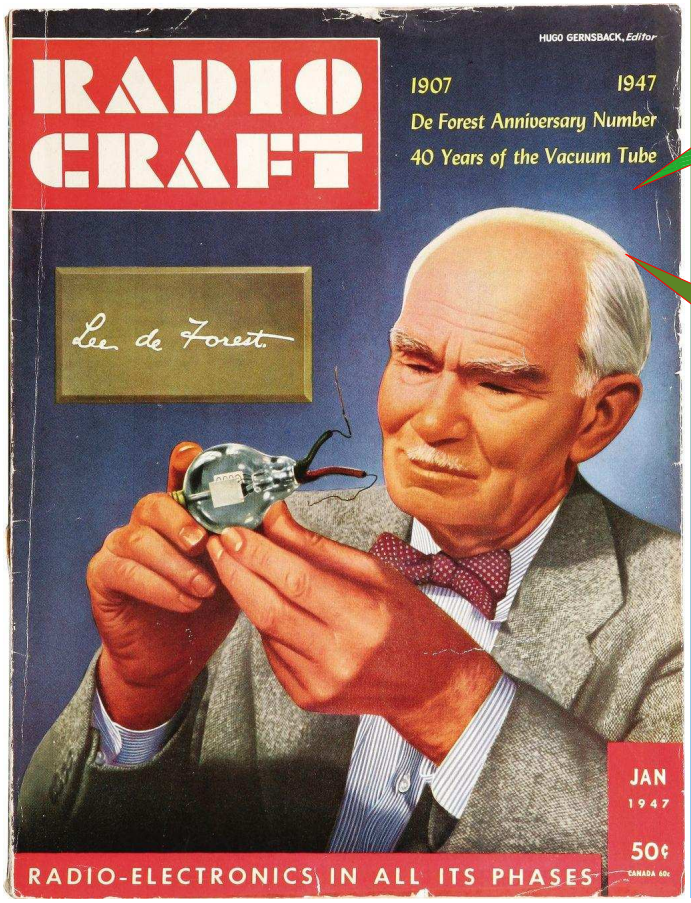


Radio Craft

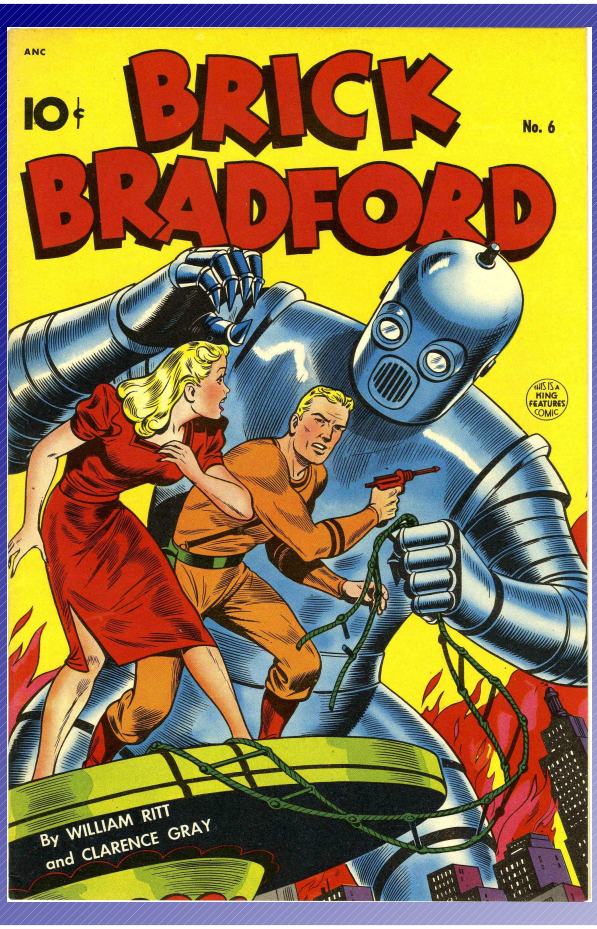
January, 1947

Alex Schomburg (attributed)

Airbrushed Photo Cover Illustration Original Art (Radio Craft Publications, 1947). Before and after his legendary career in comics, Alex Schomburg worked as a commercial artist in other fields. This handsome cover illustration used a black and white photographic image as its foundation for a portrait of Dr. Lee De Forest, "the Father of Radio." Color was then painted in on the face, hands, shirt, bow tie, parts of the vacuum tube, and also throughout the background.



The simplification of the facial features and treatment of the hands is especially well done. The end-result has a remarkable clarity, a "hyper-realistic" effect made possible only through the skillful artistic touches. The overall size of this mixed-media on board marvel measures 17" x 21", and aside from some edge wear and a stress crease to the left of Dr.



SciFi covers ...

Brick Bradford #6

(Better Publications, 1948)

"Hmm, is that Alex Schomburg ?"

Was our first thought upon seeing this issue's robot cover, and Overstreet makes the same guess, appending a question mark to the attribution. Cool stuff whatever the case.

and bondage !!!

Startling Comics #49

January 1948

Wonder Comics #13

(Better Publications, 1947)

Jungle Girl

Thrilling Comics #69

(Better Publications, 1948)

Exciting Comics #57

1947

Thrilling Comics #64

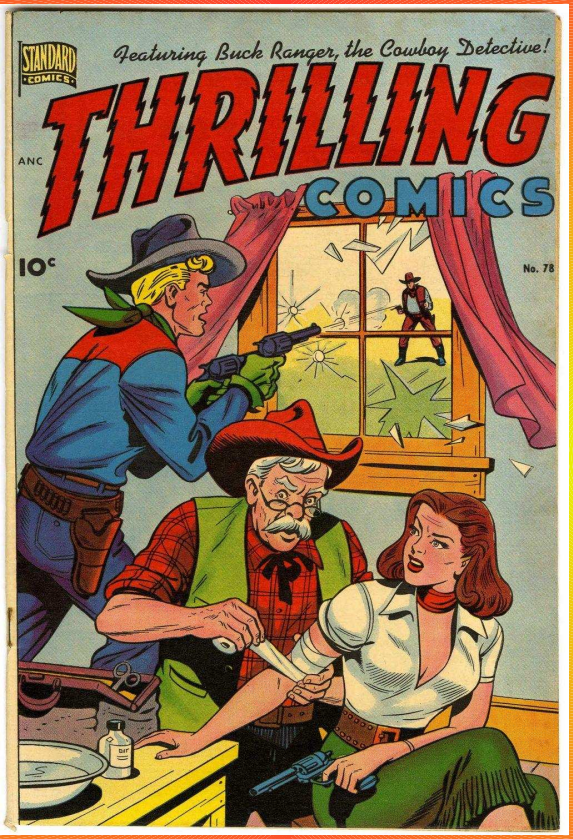
(Better Publications, 1948)

Thrilling Comics #66

(Better Publications, 1948)

The Black Terror #21

(Nedor Publications, 1948)



Thrilling Comics #78

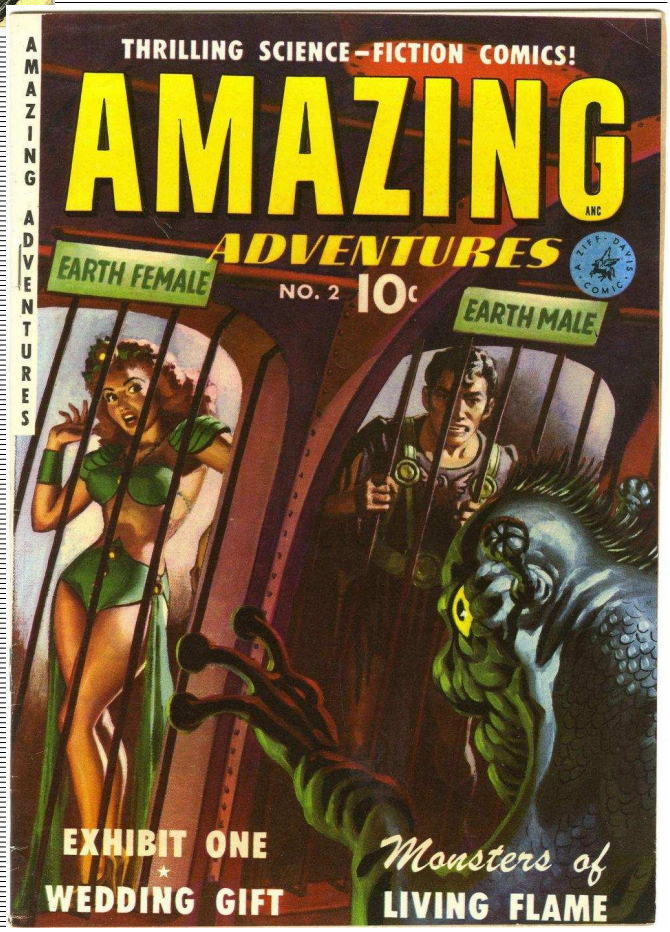
(Better Publications, 1949)

PULPS

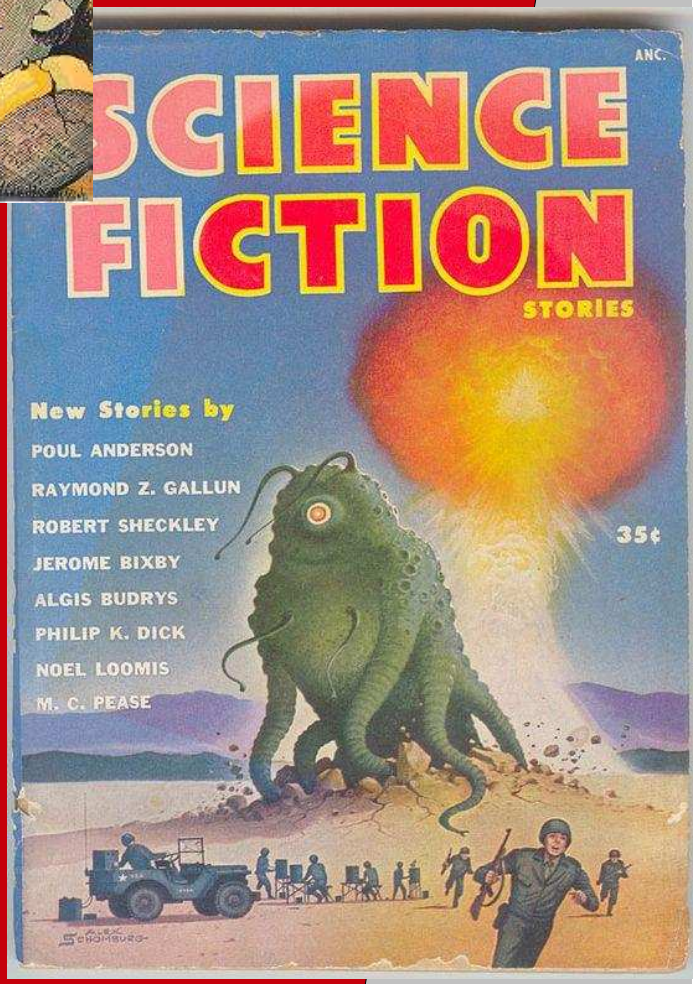
COVERS

Amazing Adventures #1 - (Ziff-Davis, 1950)

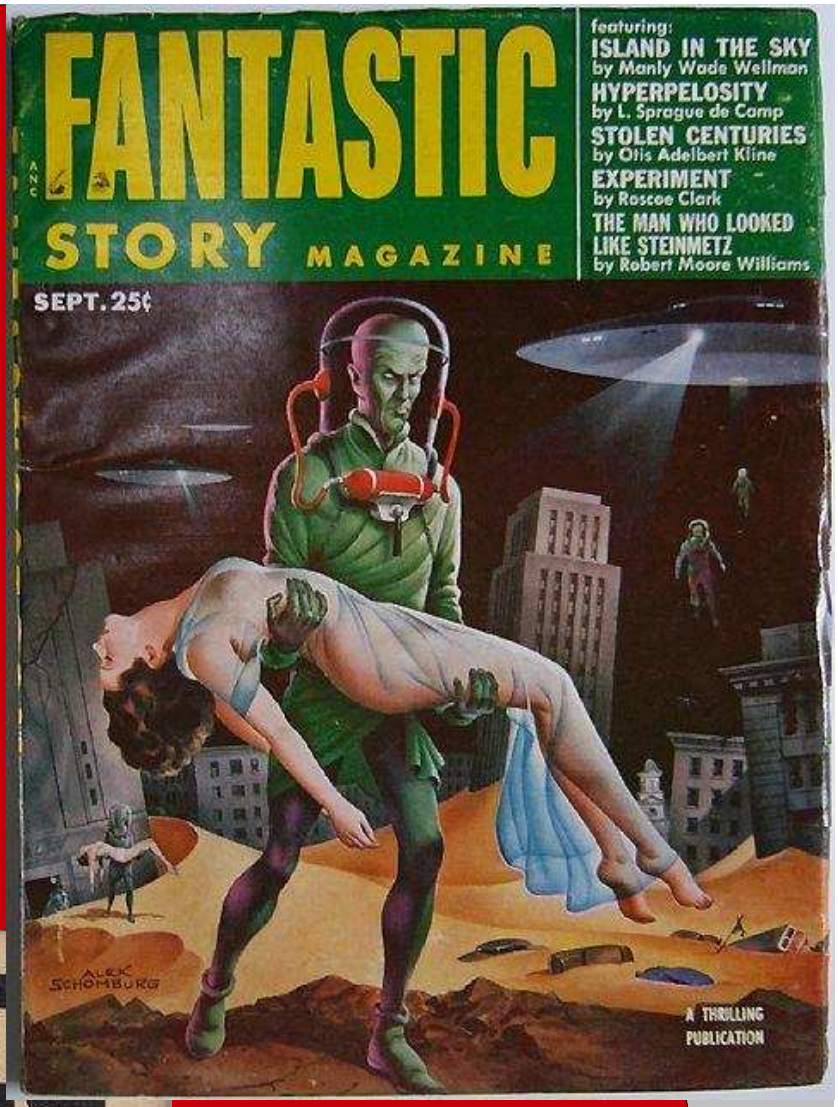
Amazing Adventures #2 - (Ziff-Davis, 1951)



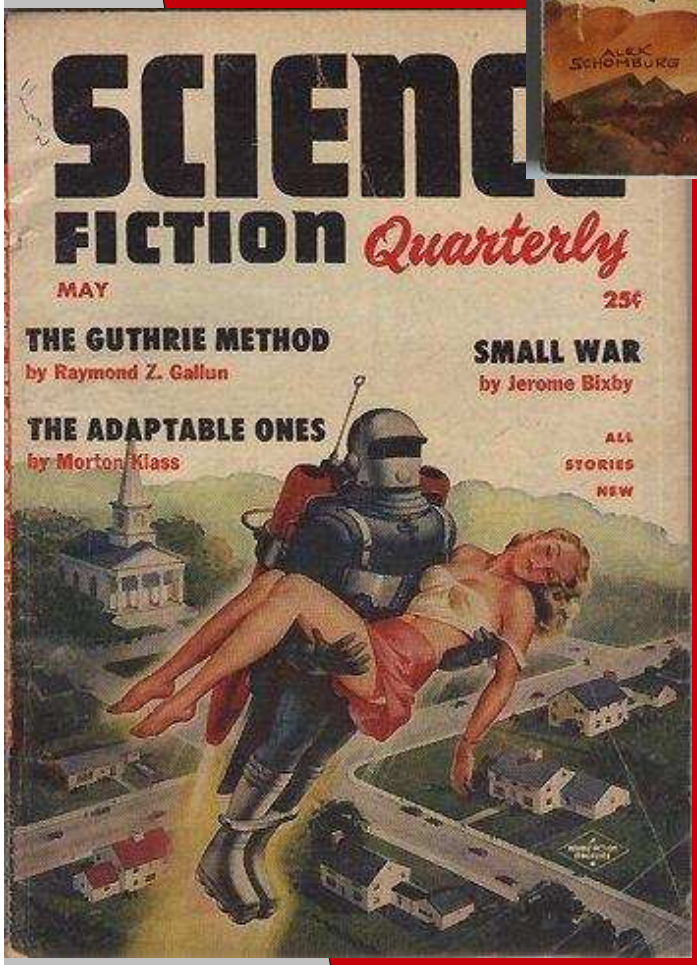
Weird Tales Of The Future
September 1952 Aragon



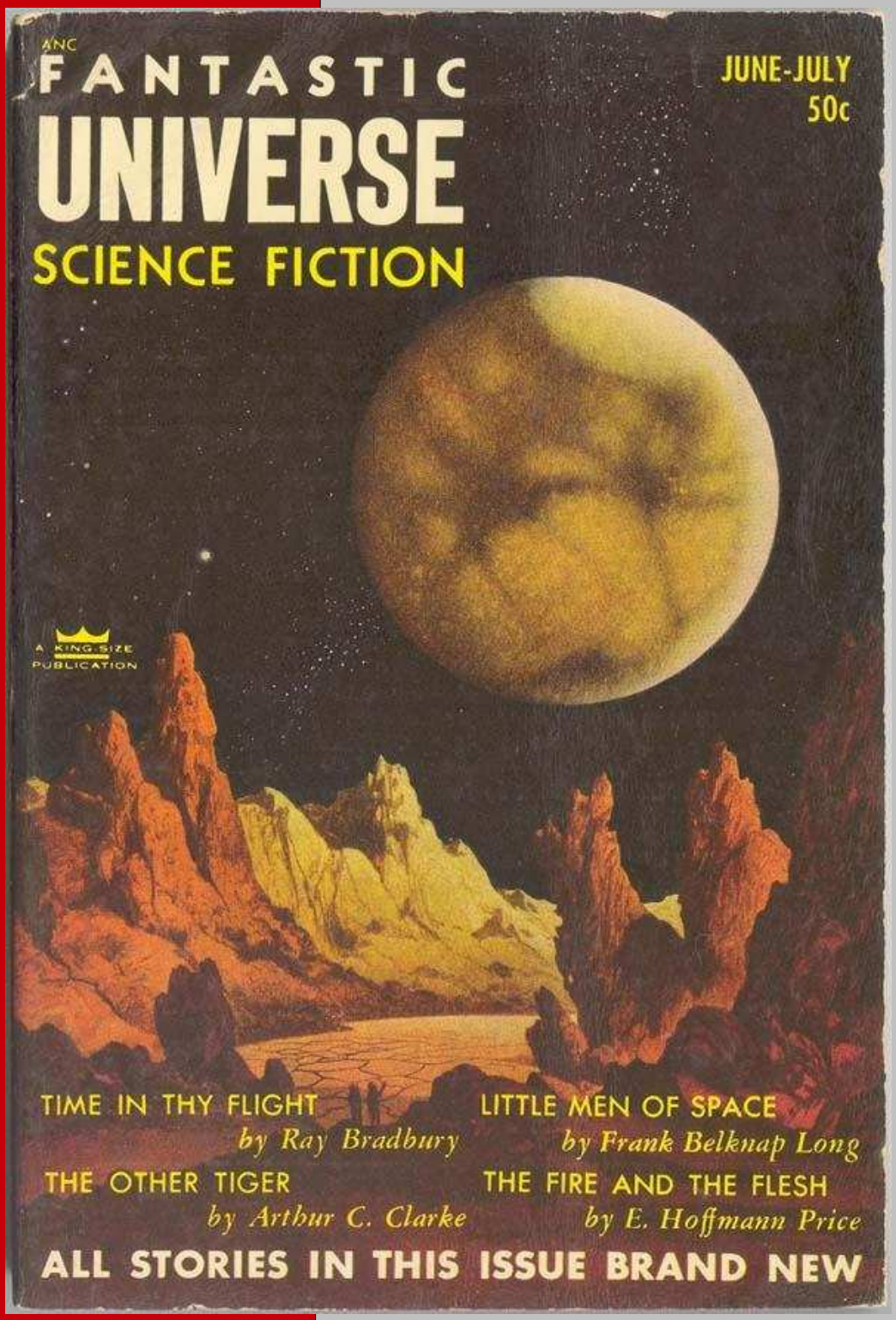
Science Fiction Stories
1953



Fantastic Story Magazine
1953



Science Fiction Quarterly
1954

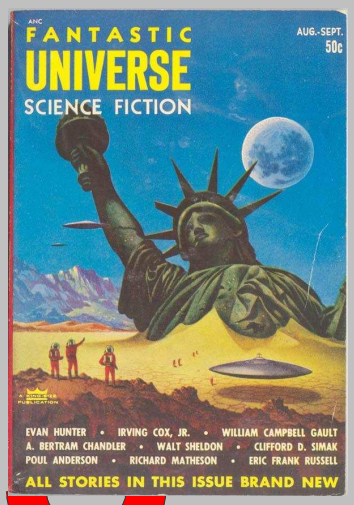


Fantastic Universe Science Fiction

June, July

1953

FANTASTIC UNIVERSE
Science Fiction



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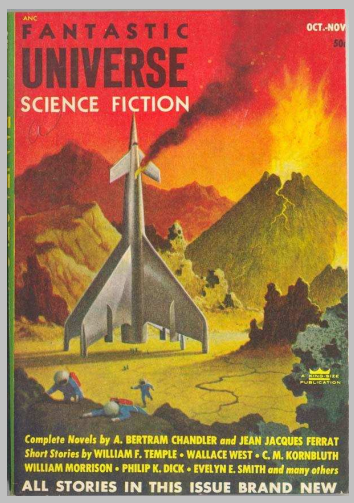

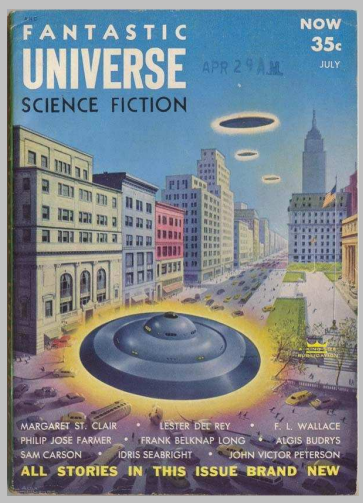

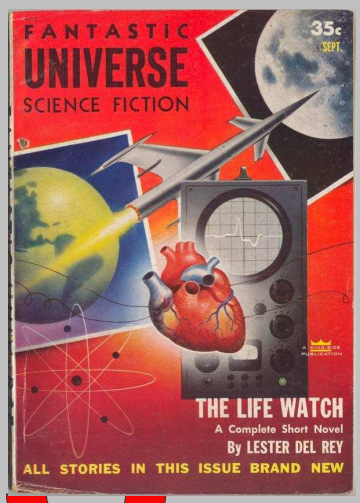

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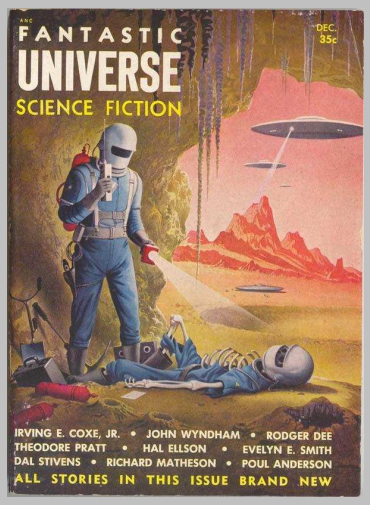
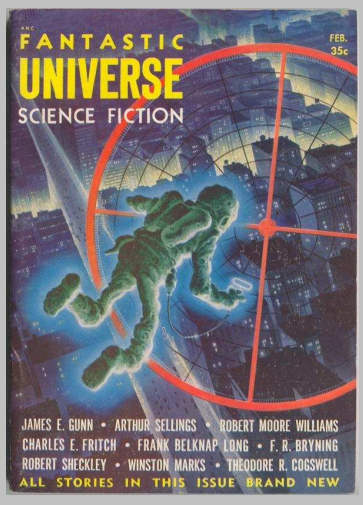
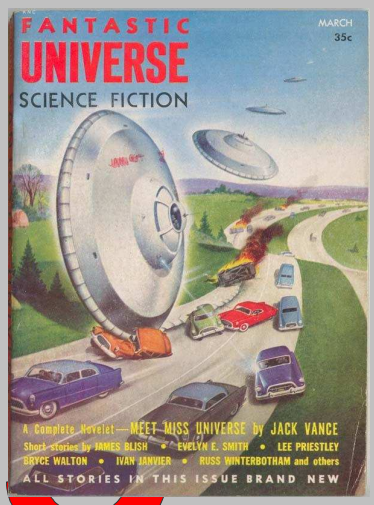
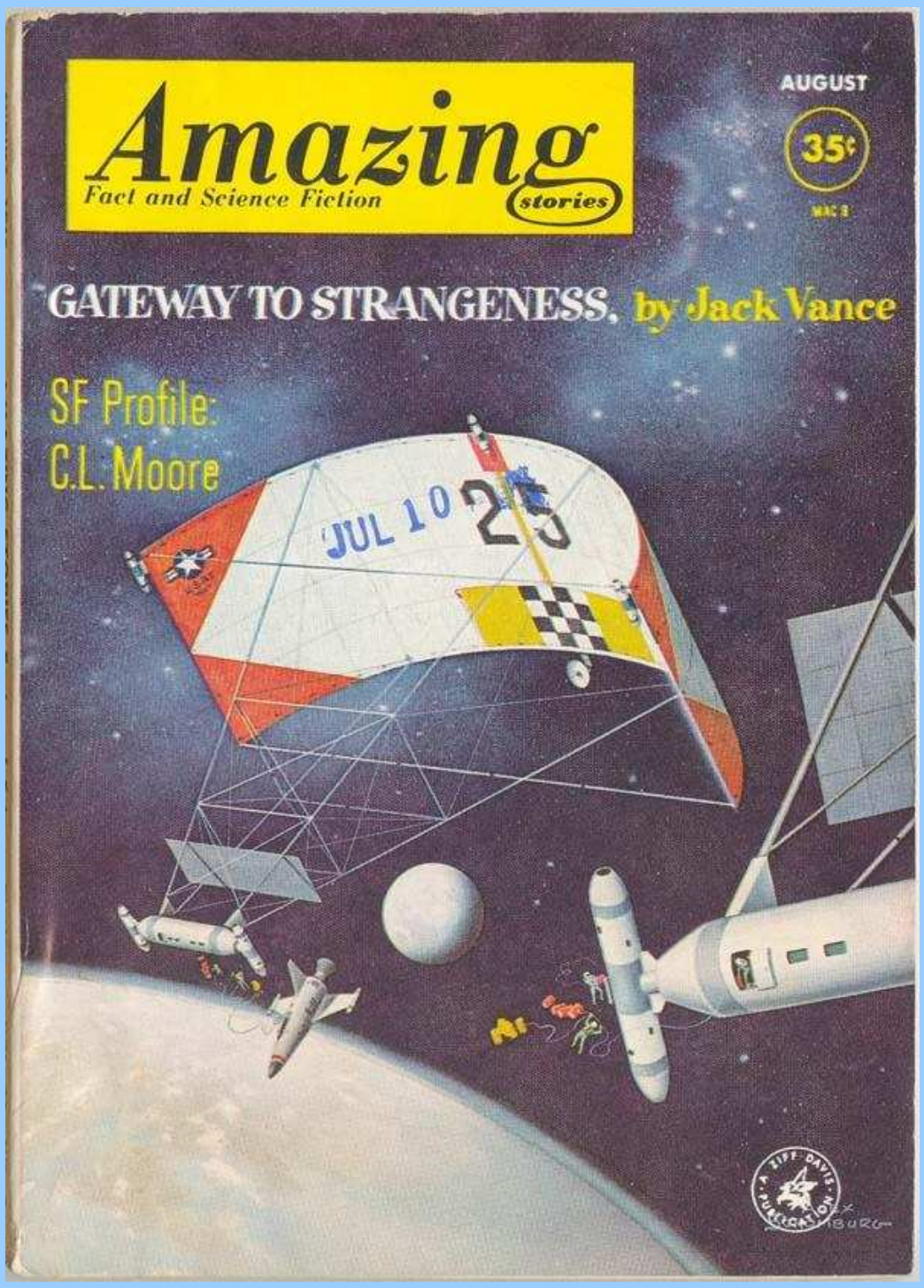






1955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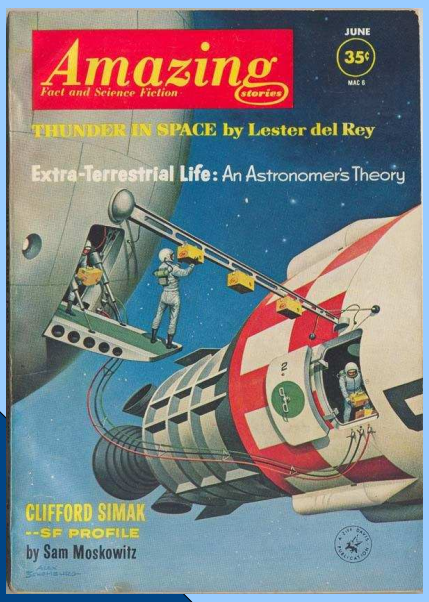
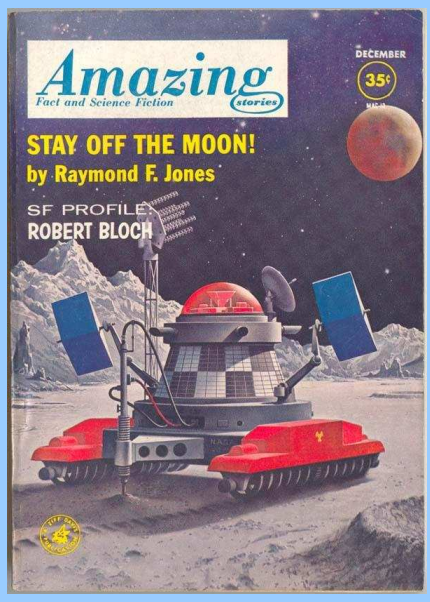
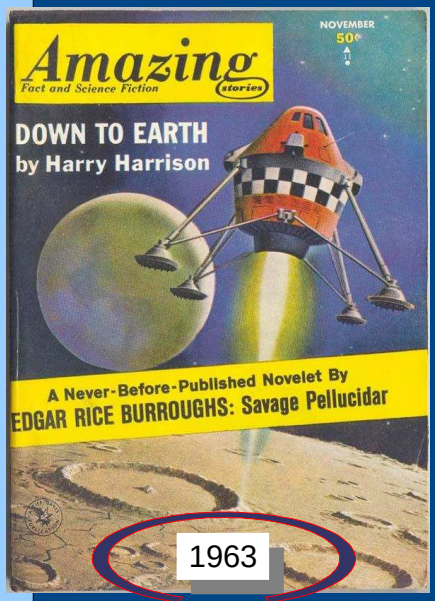
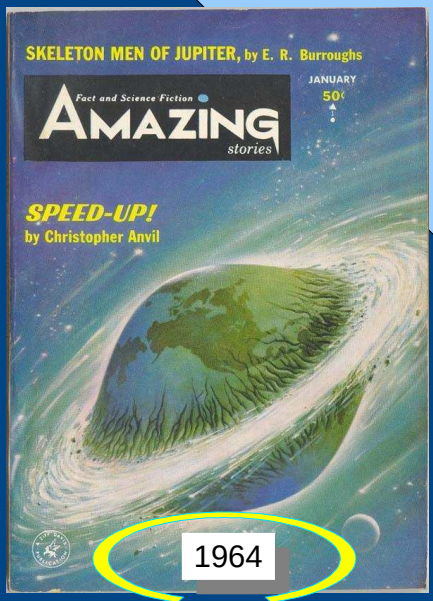
1962







1963



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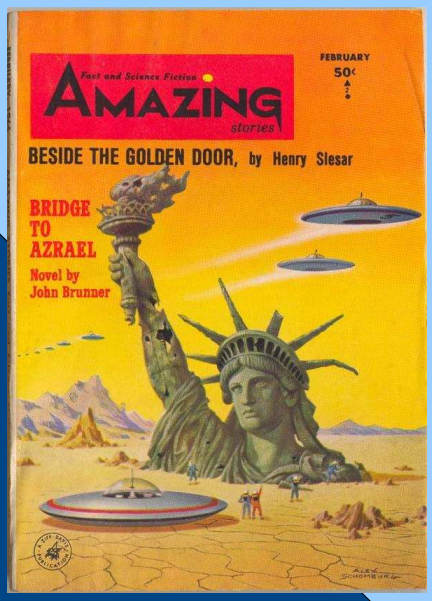

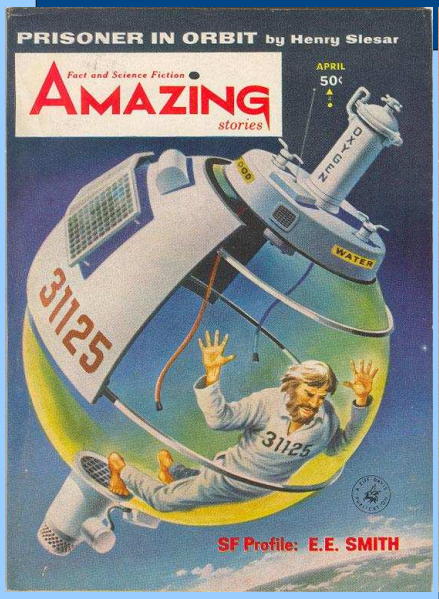

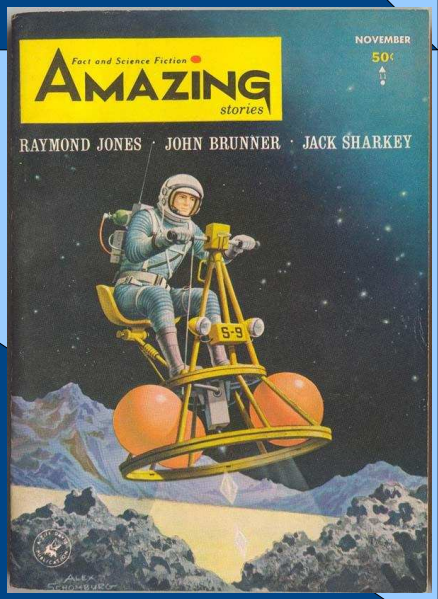

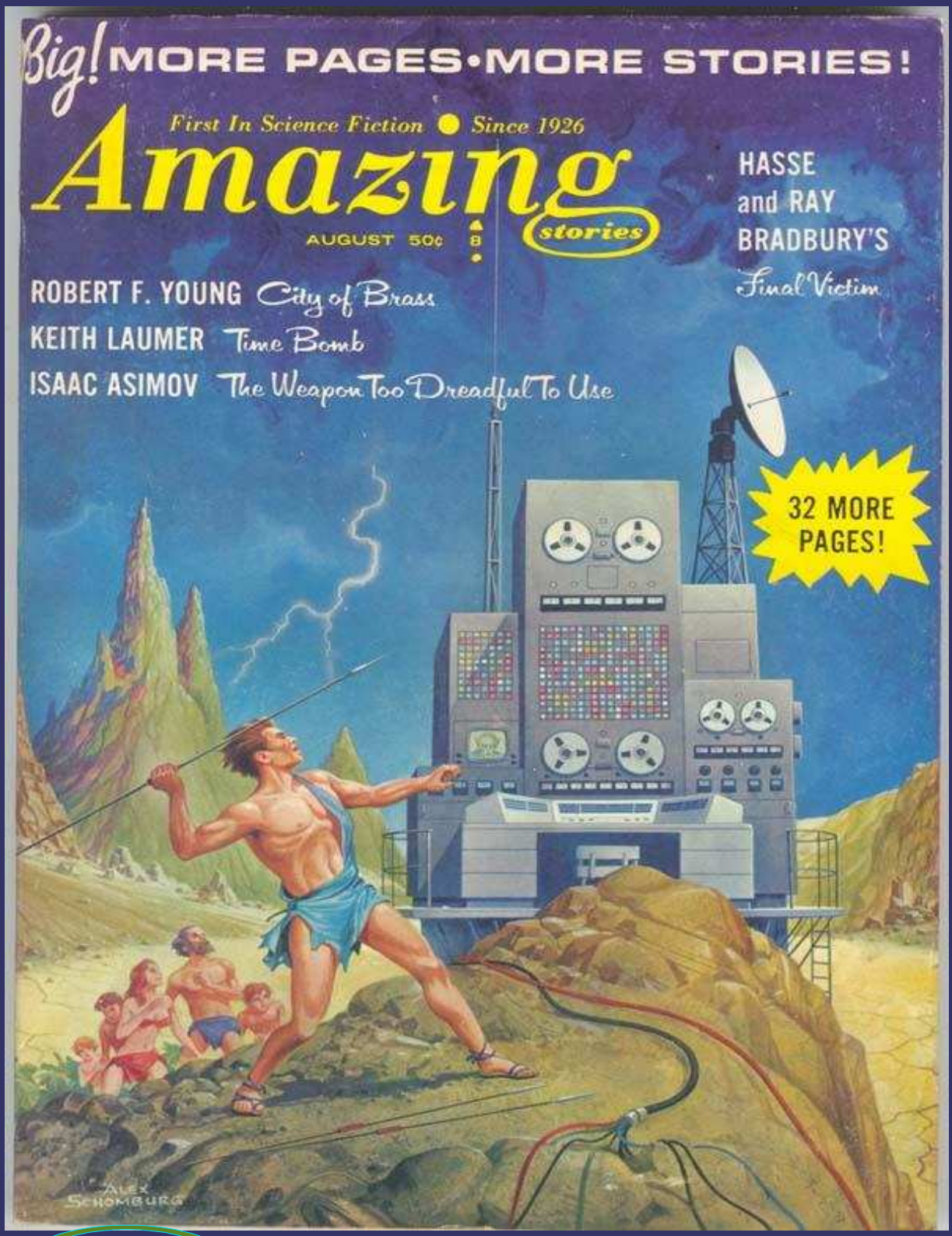
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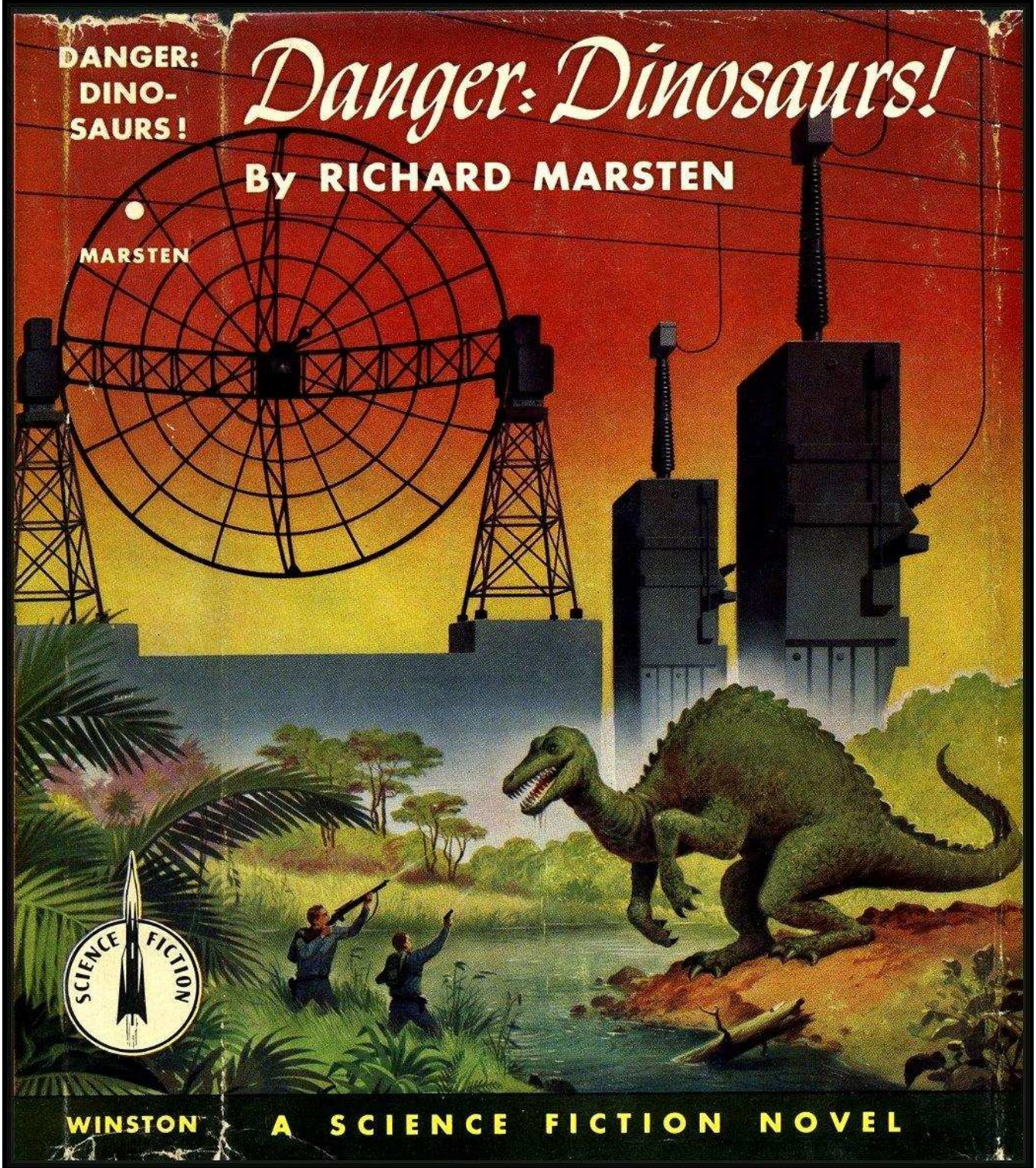
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Danger: Dinosaurs!
By RICHARD MARSTEN
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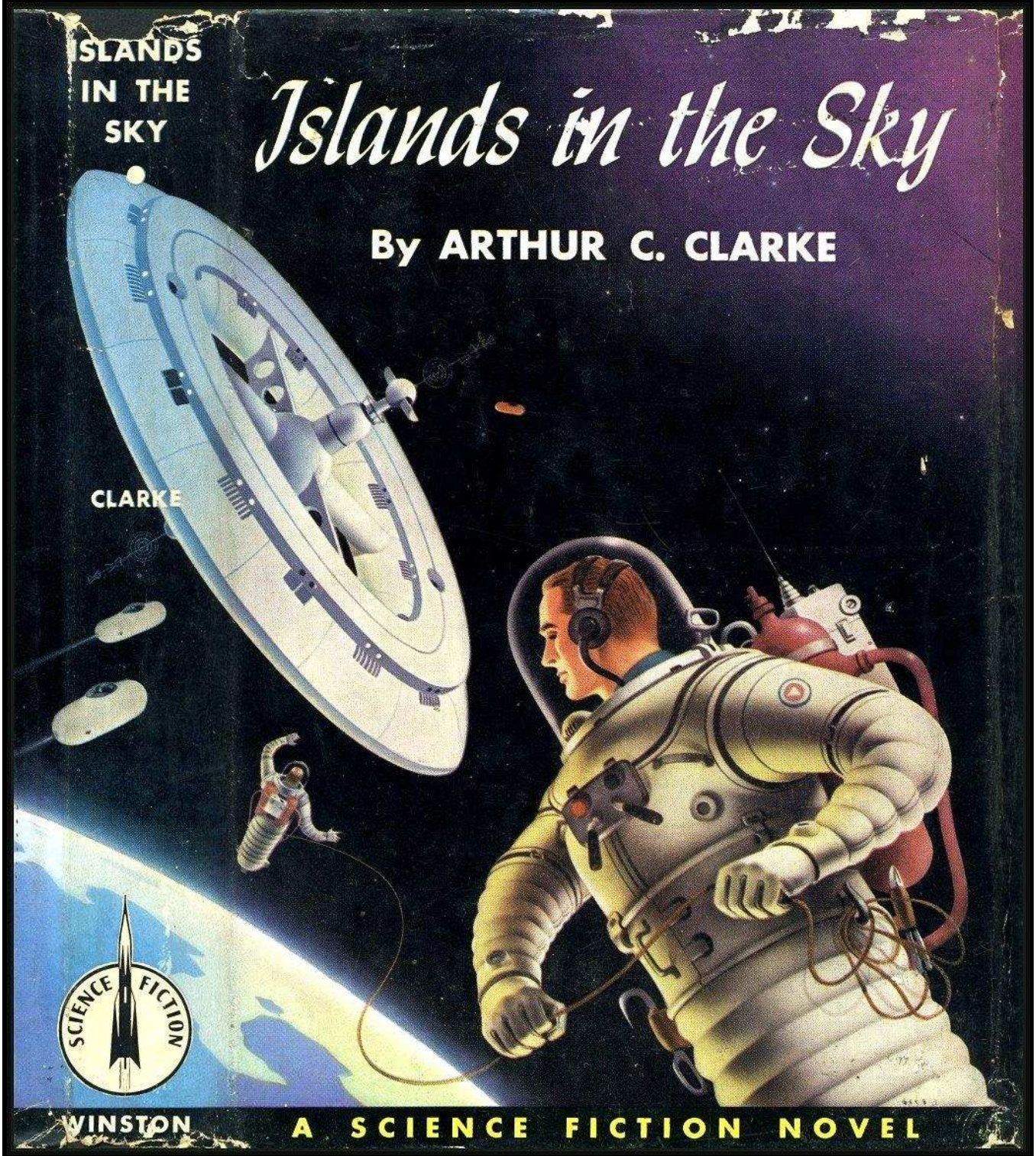
1953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Islands in the Sky
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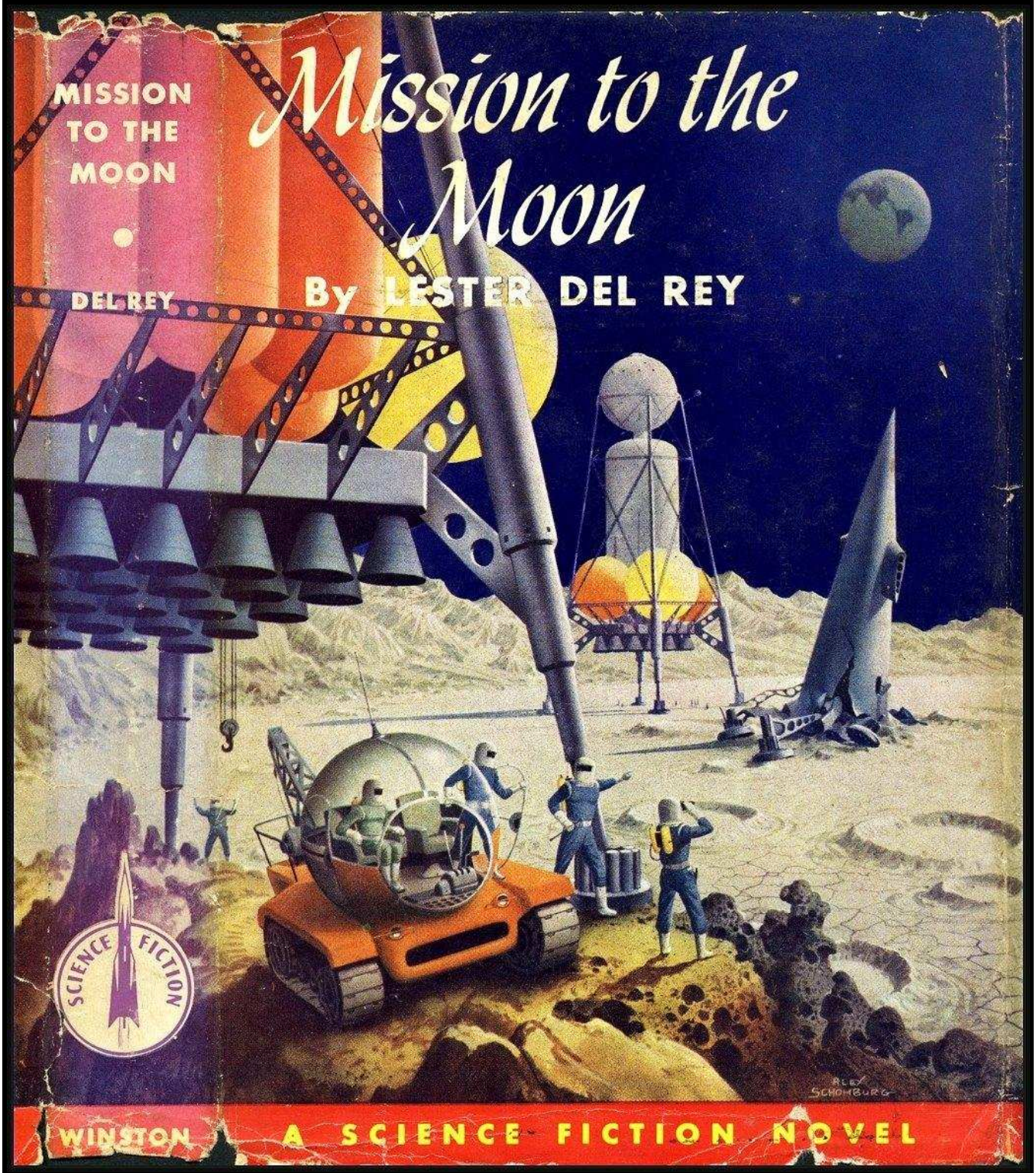
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DEL REY
Mission to the Moon
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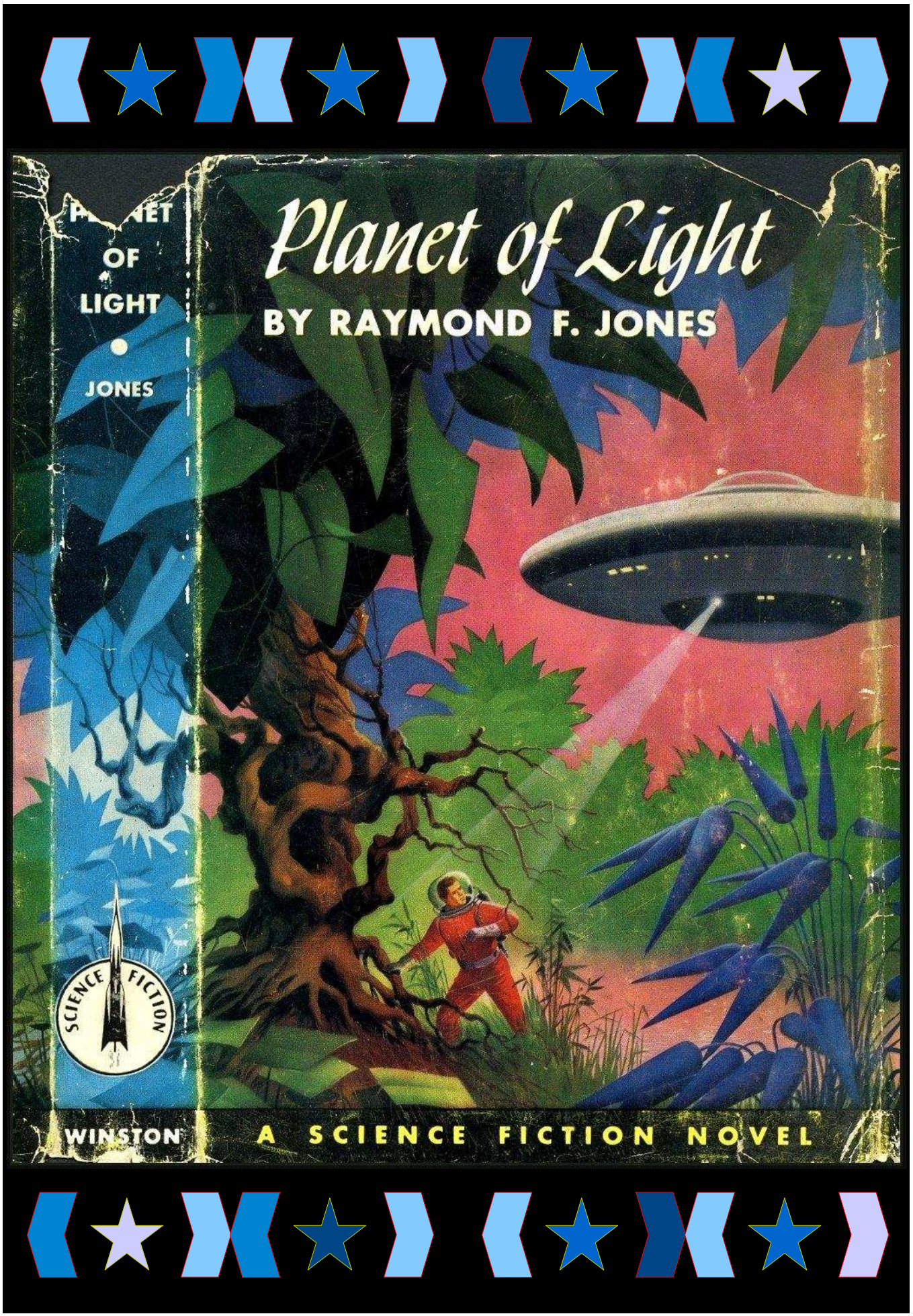
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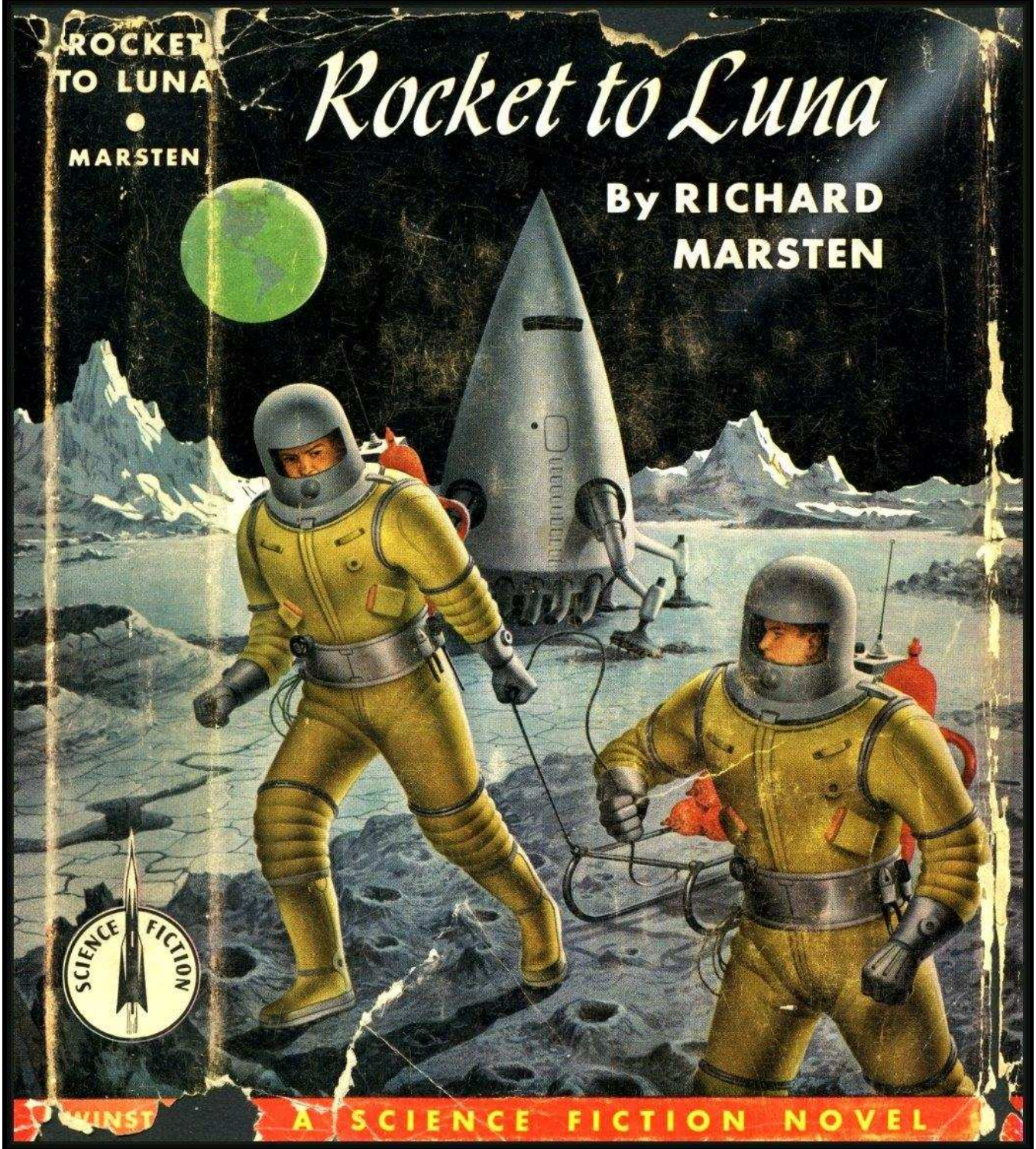
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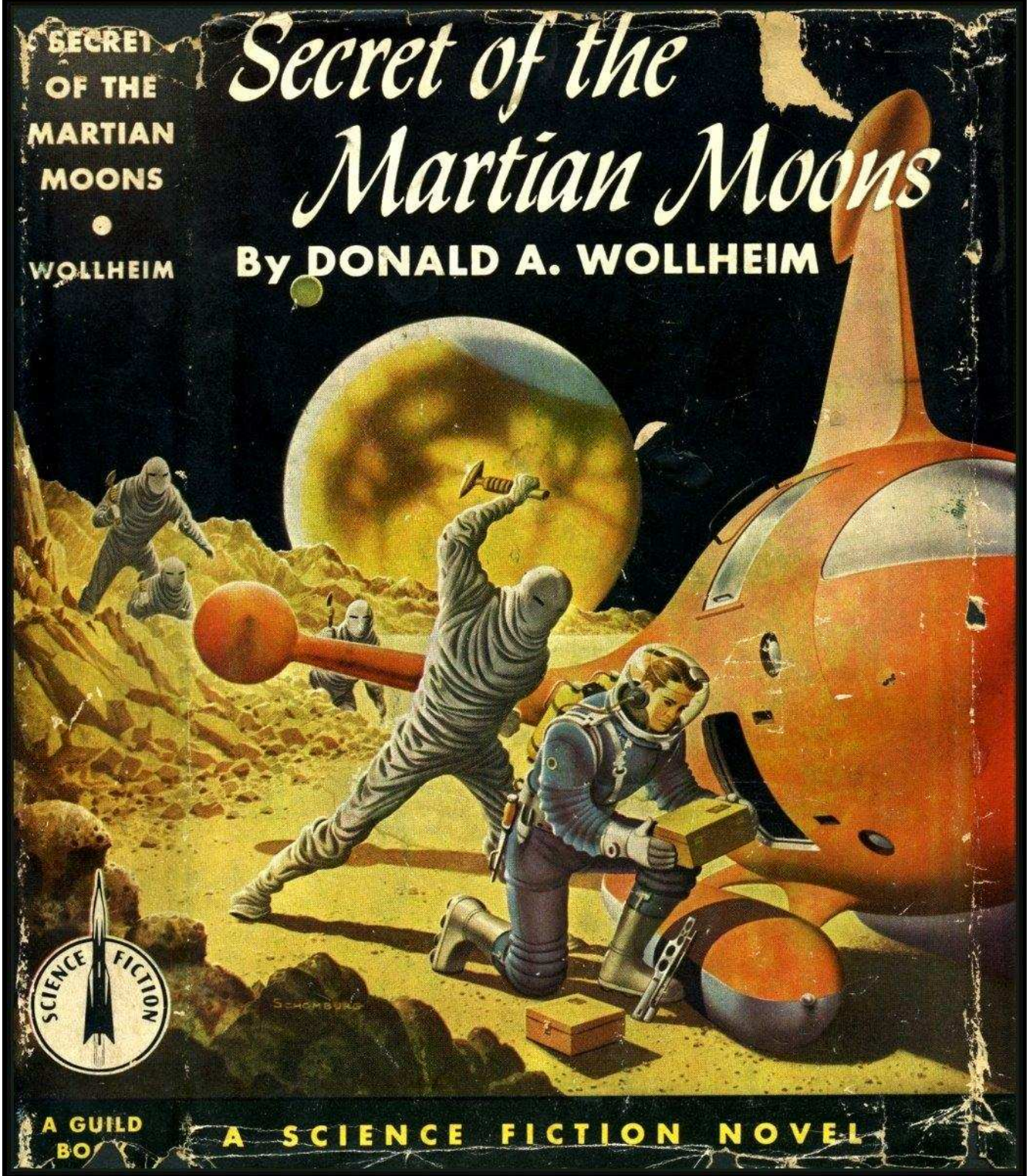
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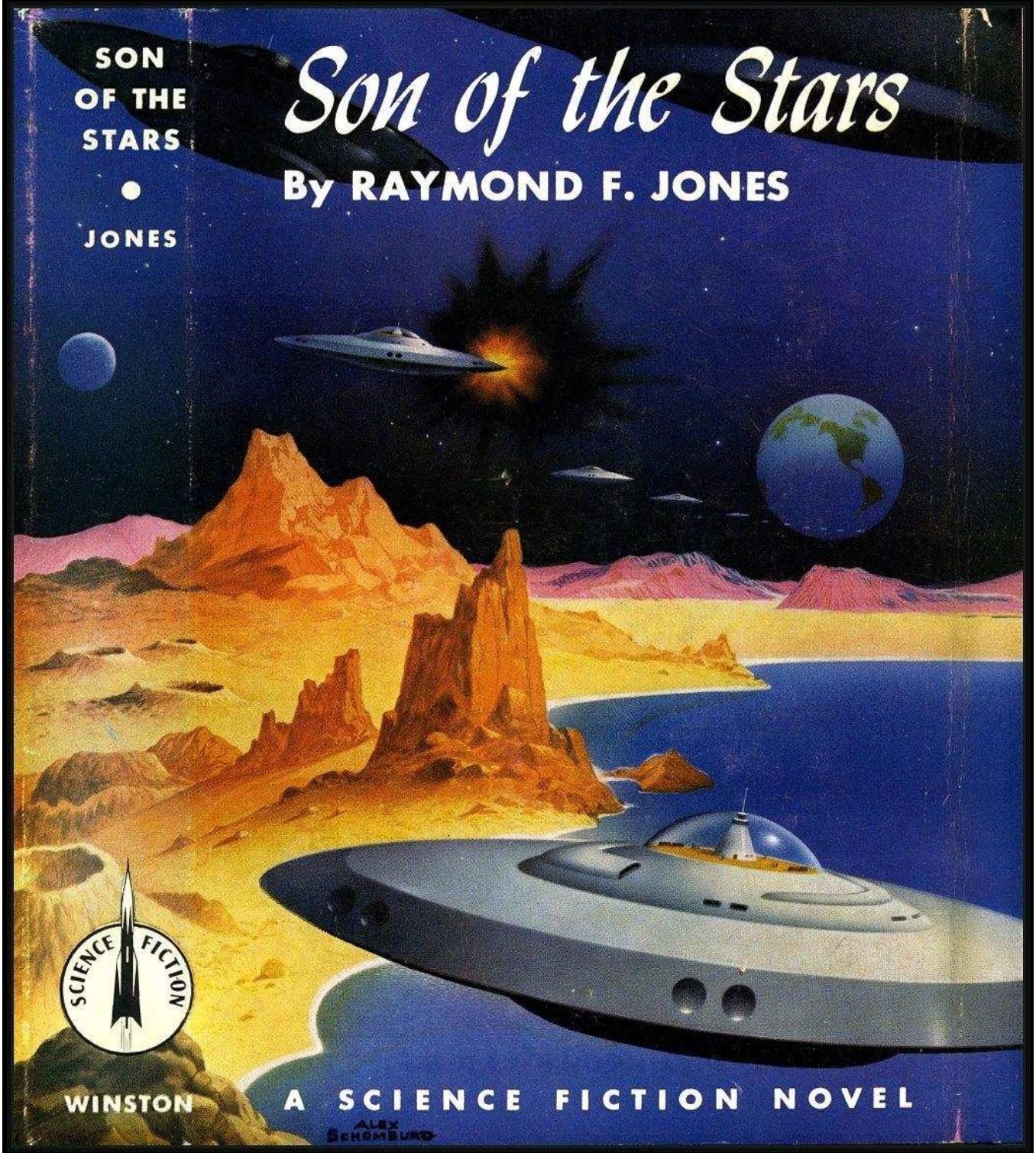
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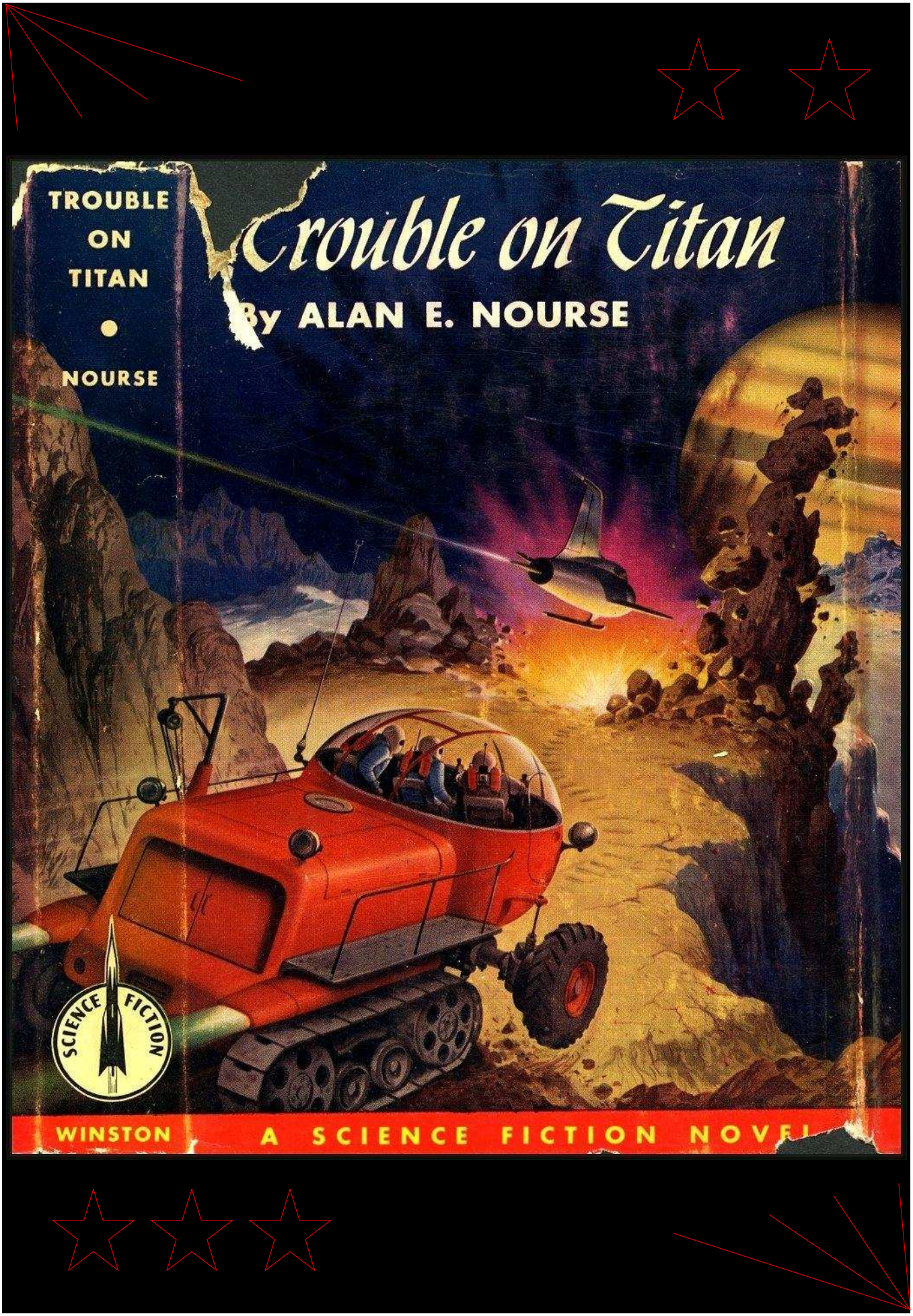
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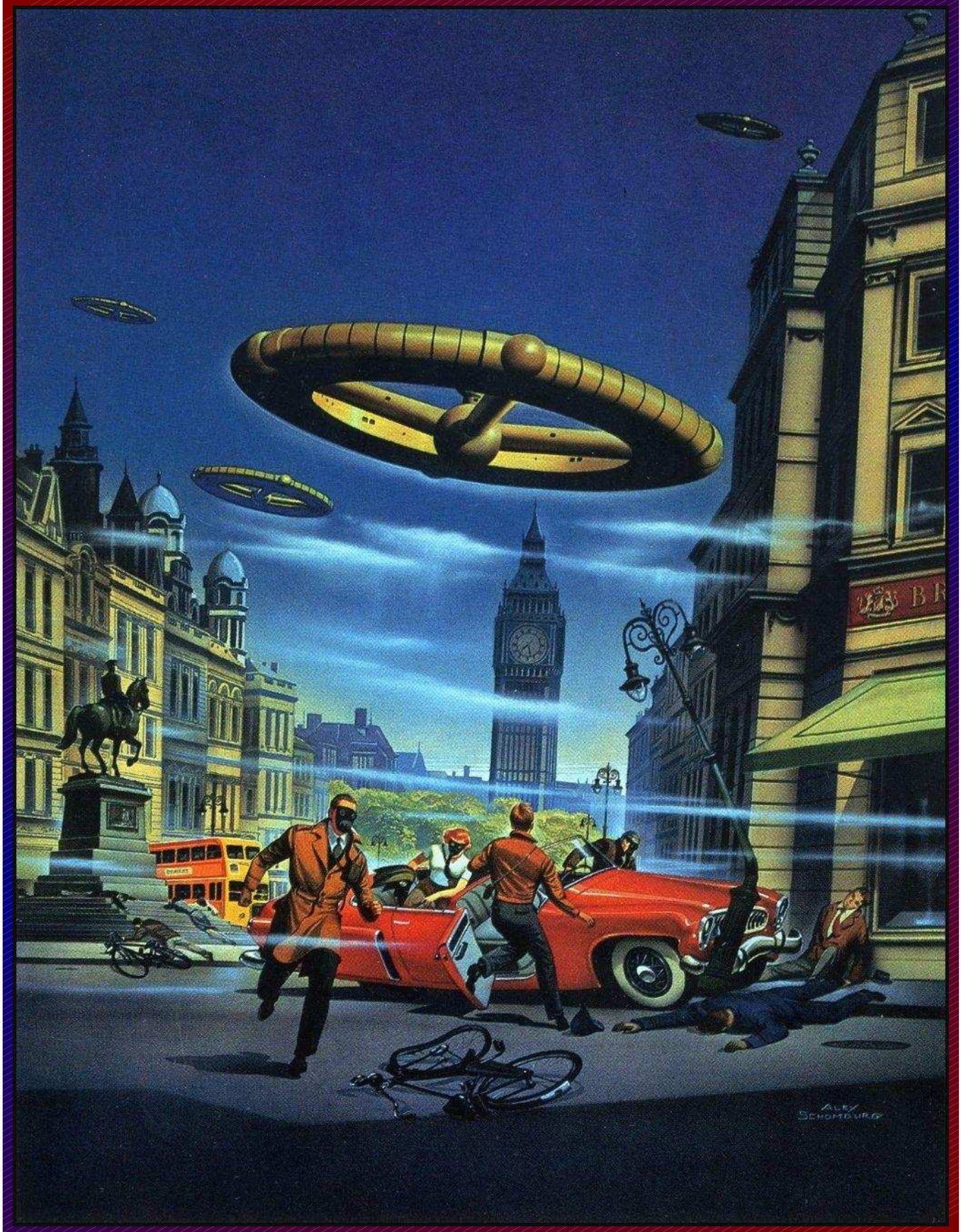
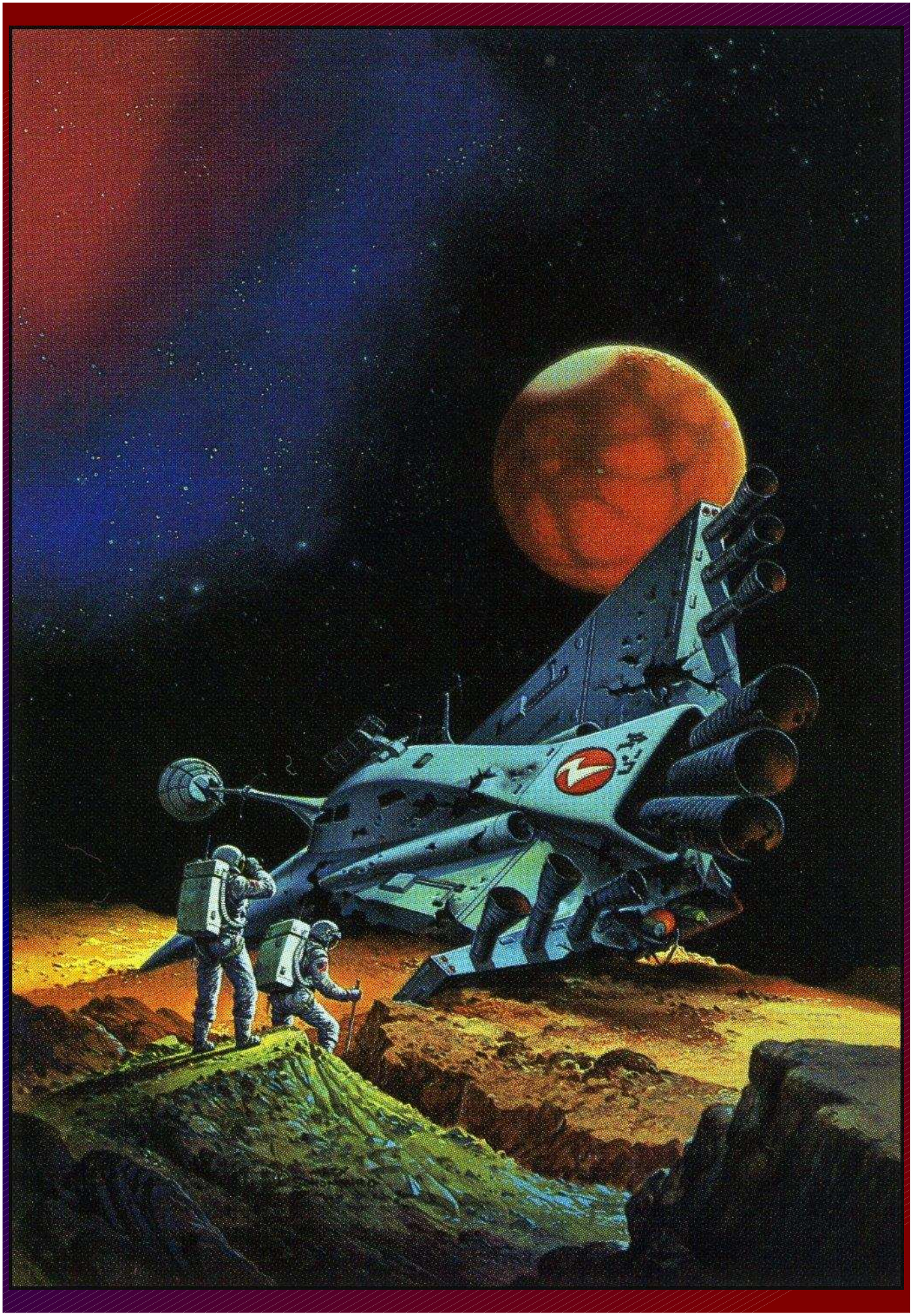
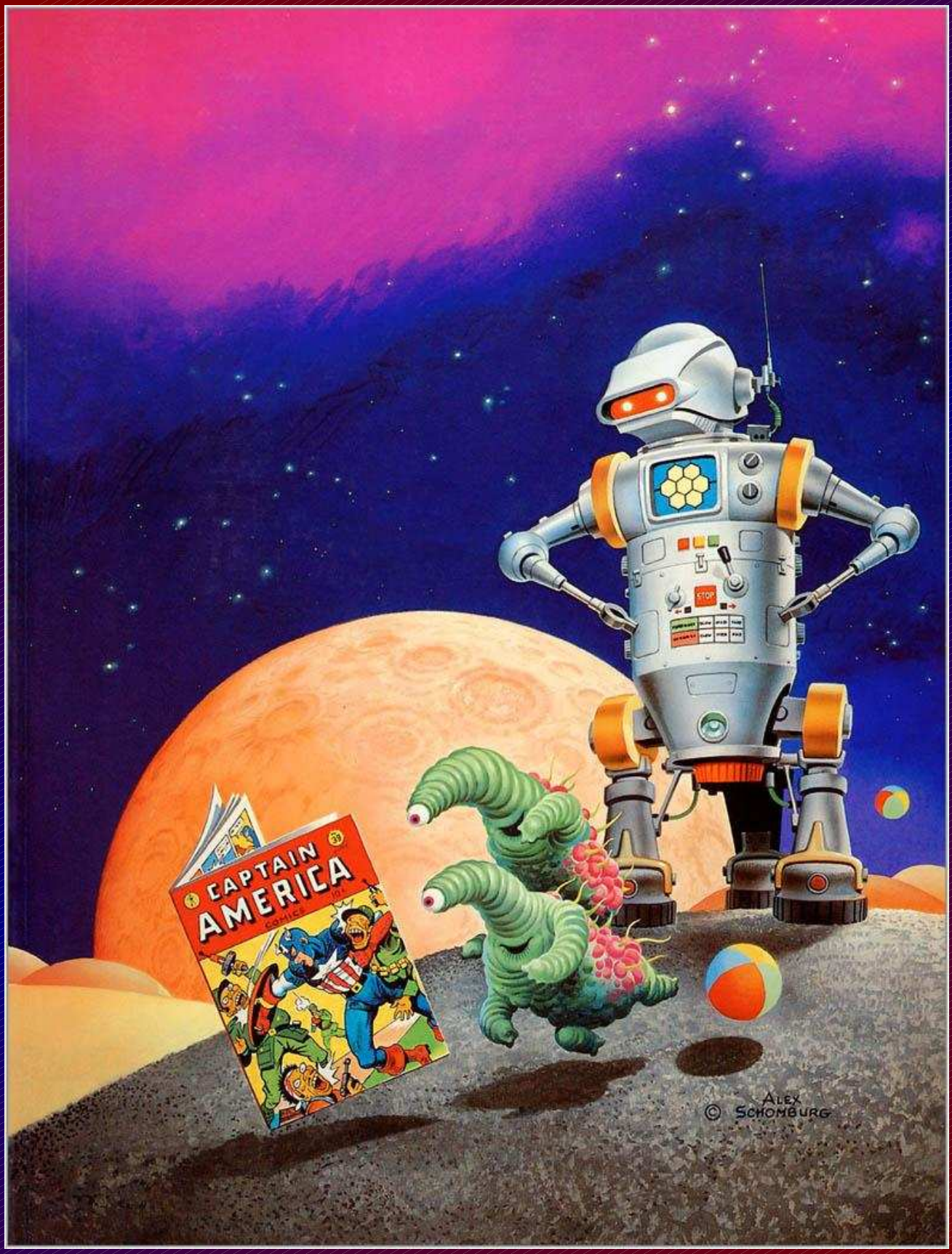


The World at Bay by Paul Capon
Cover of Alex Schomburg (1954)



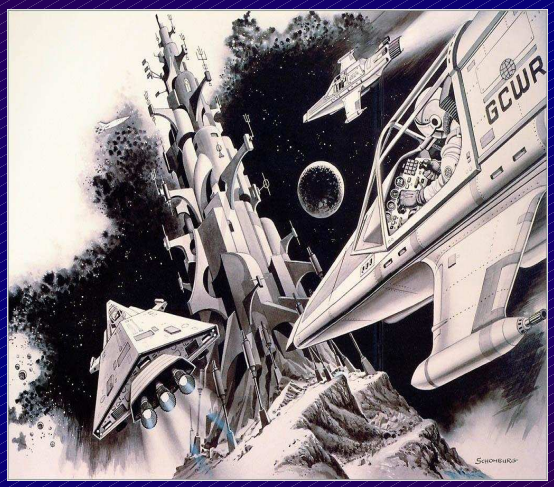


1961

1962

1963

1964



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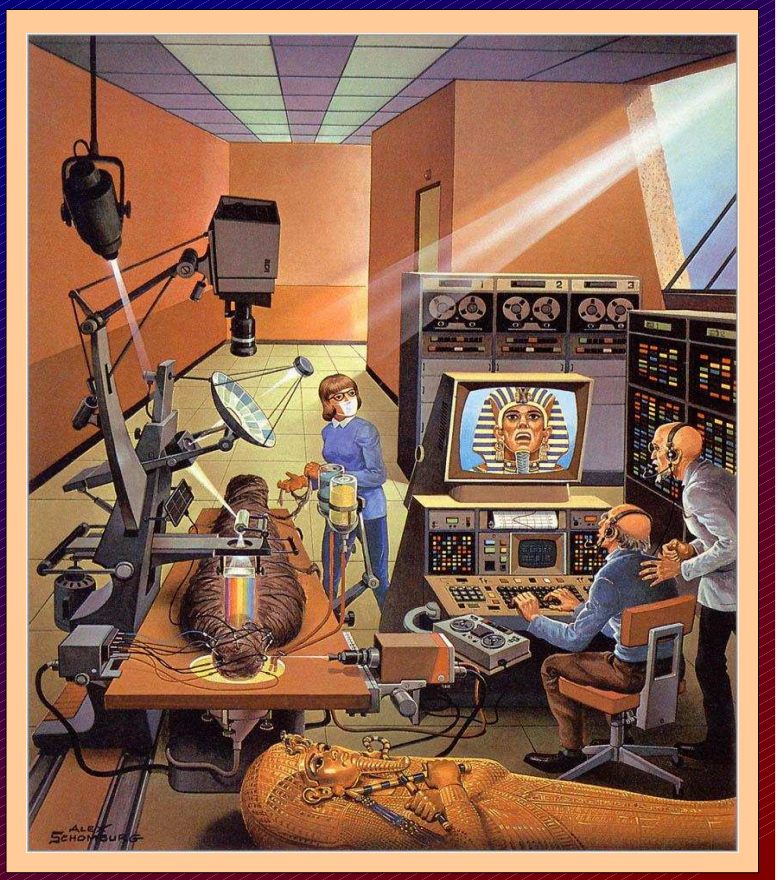

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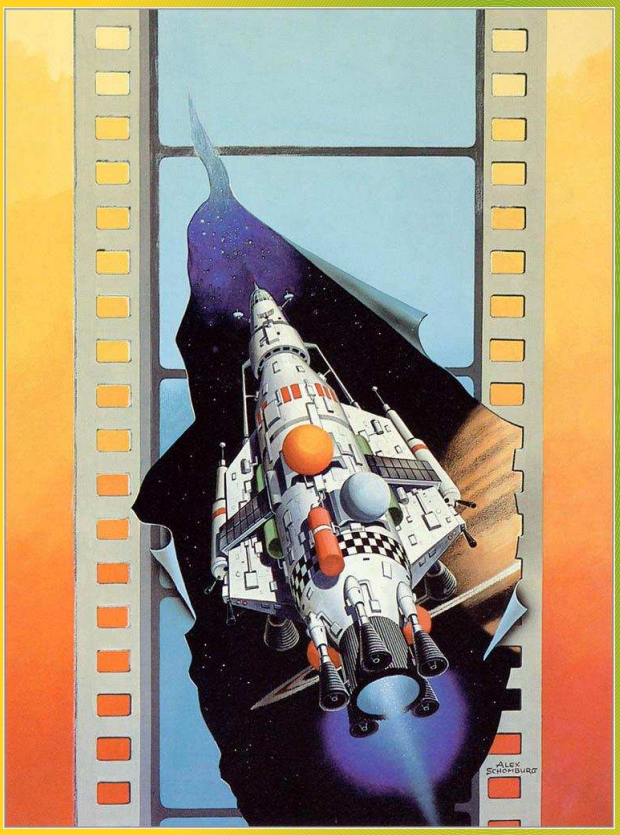

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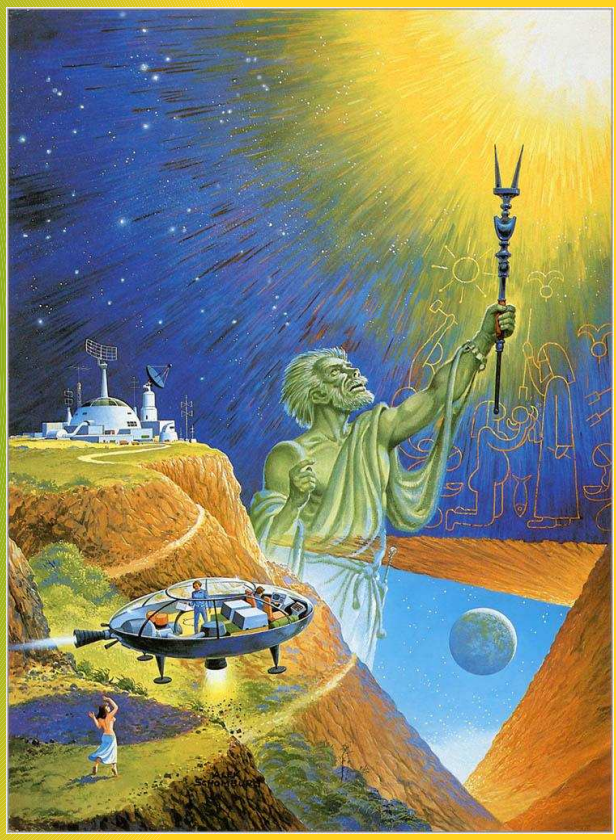

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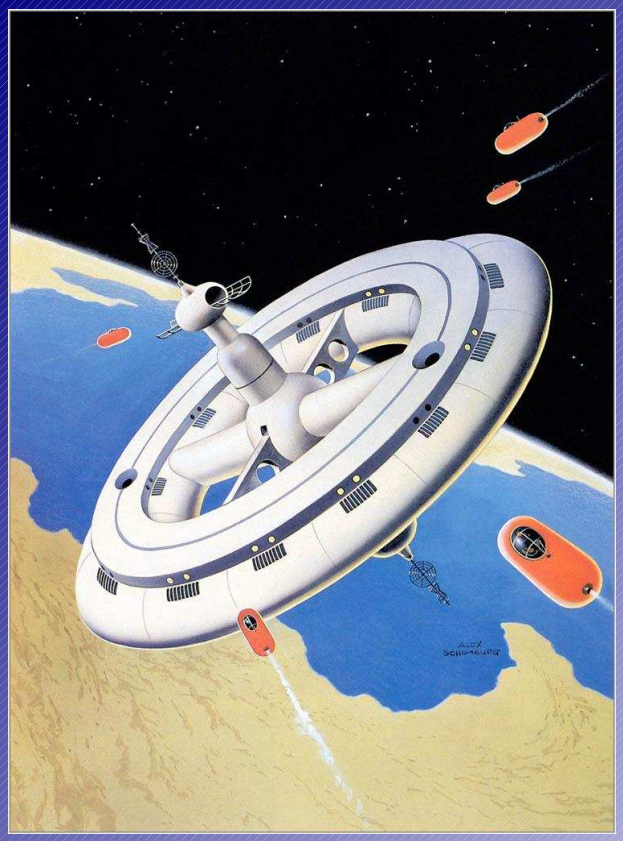

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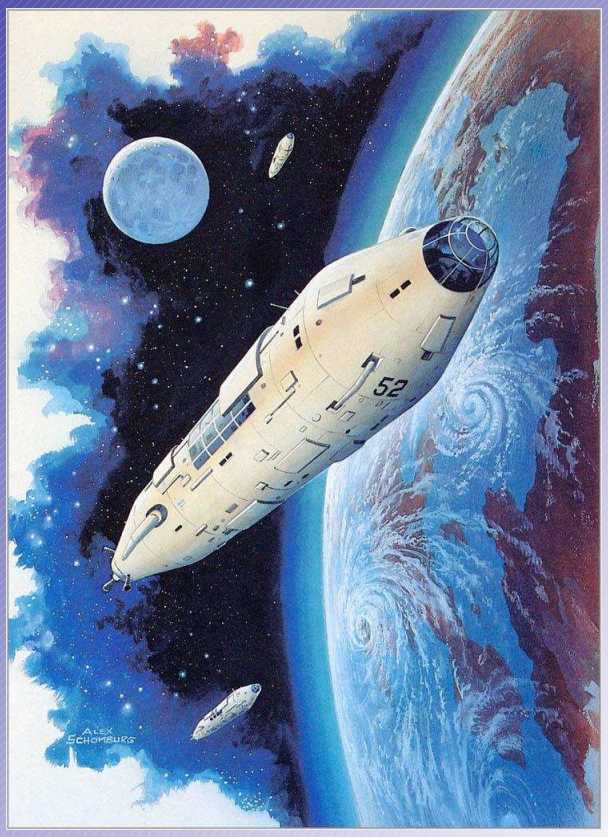


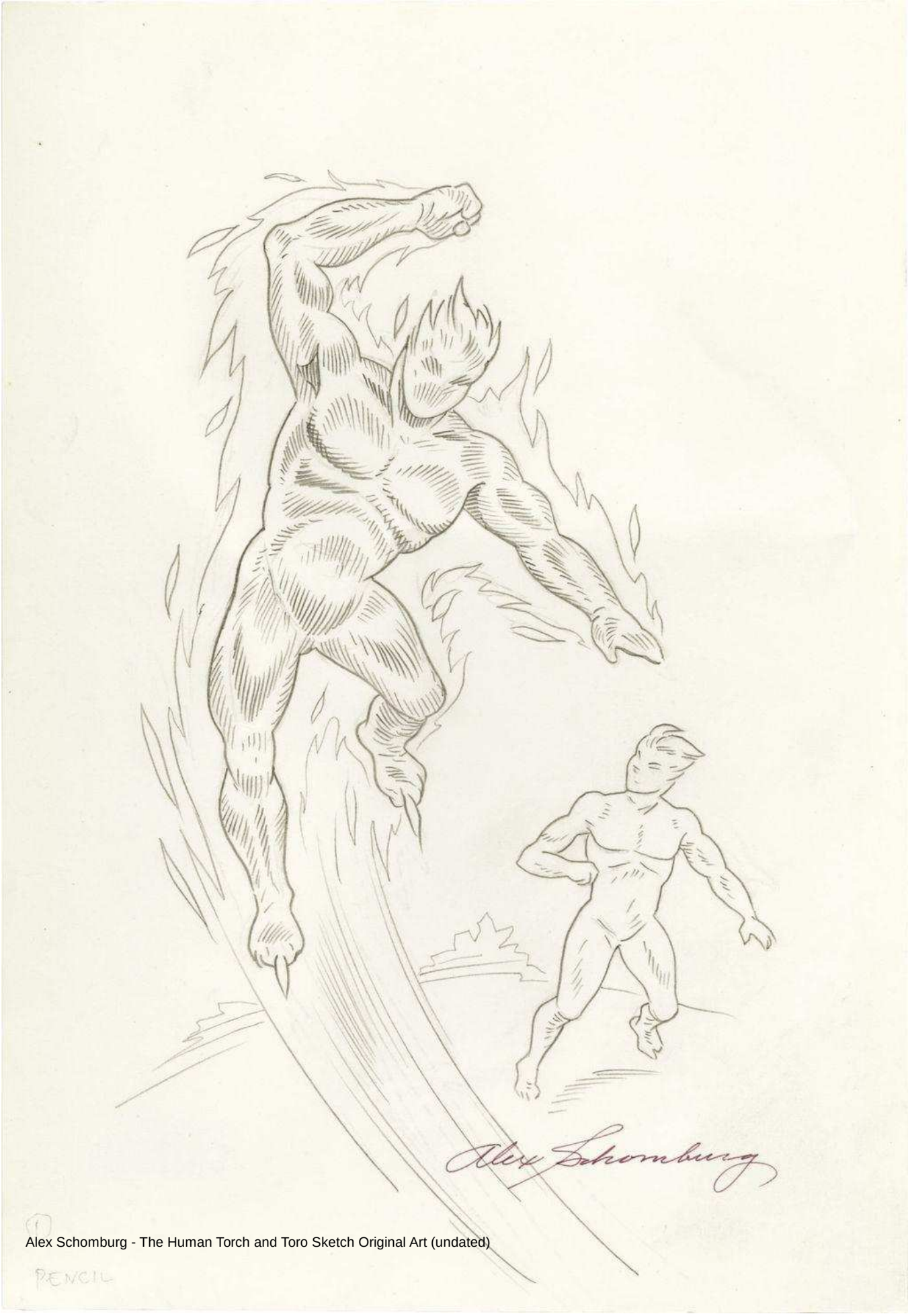
1970

Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide #21

Cover Featuring Captain America, The Human Torch, And The Sub-Mariner Original Art (1991). Look out Axis, here they come -- Captain America, the Human Torch, and the Sub-Mariner! The Timely super-stars of the Golden Age launch a thrilling three-man naval assault as only Alex Schomburg could have pictured it. This stirring scene graced the cover of 1991's Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide.

Human Torch by Alex Schomburg Poster (Marvel, 1984).

This poster by Alex Schomburg is a recreation of the cover he originally created for Marvel Mystery Comics #66. Measures 23" x 29".



Alex Schomburg - The Human Torch and Toro Sketch Original Art (undated)

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